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Indie films share critics' top prize

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Pistons rout Heat, force Game 7

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UBS report says RP 'over the hump'

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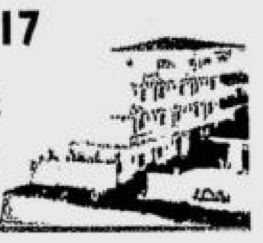
Military resort has no permit, says mayor



Better learning in 'fun' schools, survey shows

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Grade school children who expect a new round of classroom lectures when school opens today may find their teachers singing the lessons instead.

Teachers who attended the National Teach-

BETTER/ A4

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Tale of the tape part of destabilization–Bunye

By Christine Avendaño

THE OPPOSITION is set to release as part of an attempt to destabilize the administration an audio tape—reportedly provided by the US government—

TALE/ A20

EH, NASAAN NAMAN ANG TAPE?

DepEd: Classroom lack down to 8,644

DREAM PADDLES

ERIK ARAZAS

Members of the San Beda-Pangarap Shelter dragon boat rowing team display the "dream paddles" they used in the World Environment Day regatta on Manila Bay. Assisted by Hands On Manila, the boys of Pangarap Shelter painted their dreams and aspirations on the paddles.

Back to school today for 17M students

By Alcuin Papa and Michael Lim Ubac

THE DEPARTMENT of Education has eased the classroom shortage. It has reduced the classroom deficiency to only 8,644 from 57, 930.

Education Secretary Florencio Abad said the problem of classroom shortage had been addressed, but the challenge was how to decongest overcrowded schools, especially those in overpopulated communities.

The DepEd is ready to welcome 17,652,992 million public elementary and high school students trooping back to school today. *(See Table at right.)*

The student population is expected to increase by 1.68 percent this year, with projections of 12,170,867 in the elementary level and 5,482,125 in the secondary level filling the country's 41,989 public elementary and high schools.

Abad said his department did its best to reduce the lack of classrooms and teachers around the country. "We prepared long and hard for the opening of classes and everything is in readiness," he said.

The department was able to implement a two-shift policy which reduced the shortage of classrooms from 57,930 to 8,644. The two-shift policy involves splitting up a large class of around 80 to 90 students into two, so students could attend either morning or afternoon classes.

The DepEd is also hiring 10,000 more teachers this school year using a more stringent hiring policy.

This policy includes the addition of demo-teaching and written exams in English and Filipino. Aside from last year's academic standing, teacher's licensure and personal interviews, the policy also stresses the need for math and science majors to teach their areas of expertise.

The DepEd is also redeploying teachers to schools with critical shortages and reassigning teachers doing nonteaching jobs to the classrooms. *(See related stories in Across the Nation, Page A18.)*

"The issue of teacher shortage is really about proper distribution. Of course it's not easy to redeploy teachers because it would be impractical for some to relocate. But we are working on filling up underprovided areas from the areas with excess teachers," said Abad.

Even so, Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casiño said the shortage in classrooms and teachers was bound to get bigger as public school enrollment swells following the unregulated and unbridled tuition increases in private schools.

DEPED/ A4

EDUCATION FAST FACTS

Enrollment Projections		
Total	22.7 million	
New entrants, Grade 1*	3.6 million	
	Public	**Private**
Preschool**	349,653	297,880
Elementary	12,110,265	962,122
Secondary	5,251,828	1,268,255
College	917,126	1,564,707
Teacher-pupil ratio* **		
Elementary	1:36	
Secondary	1:40	
Textbook ratio** **		
Elementary	1:1.0826	
Secondary	1:1.2510	
No. of teachers		
Elementary	371,384 (69% female)	
Secondary	163,646	
College	109,979 (55% female)	
Shortages		
Classrooms	57,000	
Teachers	10,000	
No. of students in a classroom		
Allowable number of students	56	
Actual number of students	More than 60	
Education budget*** **		
DepEd	P103.6B (highest after debt service)	
Education expenditures		
% to total government expenditure	17.8	
% to GDP	3.1	

Compiled by: Chona Galang, PDI Research

NOTES:
** projected at last year's increase of elementary enrollment*
*** based on SY 2001-2002 enrollment*
**** public schools only, SY 2002-2003*
***** average textbook ratio as of May 16, 2005*
****** based on 2005 GAA, includes P1 billion budget for school building program; second highest after debt service, P301.7 billion*

Source: Department of Education (DepEd), Global Education Digest 2005 by the Unesco Institute for Statistics

Malacañang open to truth commission

By Christine O. Avendaño, Norman Bordadora and Michael Lim Ubac

MALACAÑANG indicated yesterday it was open to the idea of a truth commission being formed to investigate allegations that government officials took "jueteng" bribes, but lawmakers shot down the idea.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said that the Palace would leave it to "the sound discretion and wisdom of members of the legislature" to decide on the proposal made by Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, himself allegedly involved in the scandal.

"If they will agree to transfer the investigation to an independent commission to be made up of retired justices, then there is nothing wrong about this proposal for as long as there is an agreement," Bunye said over RMN radio.

Bunye reiterated that President Macapagal-Arroyo viewed as serious the allegations

MALACAÑANG/ A20

2 ex-gambling lords ready to link 'big names'

By Christian V. Esguerra and TJ Burgonio

TWO FORMER gambling lords have decided to come out and are ready to implicate big names in the "jueteng" racket, Archbishop Oscar Cruz said yesterday on the eve of the resumption of a Senate inquiry into the illegal numbers game.

"These guys are big," Cruz told the INQUIRER. "They're much bigger than [Wilfredo] Mayor in the jueteng circle. They can tell a lot. They are jueteng lords."

Cruz did not identify his new witnesses.

Today's hearing, starting at around 10 a.m., is expected to produce more fireworks.

Three men whom Mayor last week linked to alleged gambling payoffs supposedly intended for the President's son, Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo, are expected to confront their accuser when they appear before the Senate.

The three are former Vice Mayor Arturo Naguit of Minalin, Pampanga, and two friends of Congressman Arroyo—stockbroker Leon Katigbak and civil engineer Rene Maglanque.

Arroyo and the three have denounced Mayor's allegations as a fabrication.

But Cruz's supposed two "big" new witnesses are not expected to appear at the Senate as they have not been officially summoned.

The archbishop said he had "known for a long time" one of his two new witnesses. Asked why the two witnesses were coming out now, he said: "They don't like jueteng anymore."

But Cruz said he would

2 EX-GAMBLING/ A20

Con-con call GMA way of defusing tensions

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

THE ANNOUNCEMENT of President Macapagal-Arroyo last week that she would call a constitutional convention (Con-con) next year to consider proposals for a shift to the parliamentary from the presidential system and a replacement of the unitary and highly centralized setup with a federal structure put in the fast lane the long-festering clamor for constitutional change.

The announcement ended a yearlong moratorium on constitutional changes.

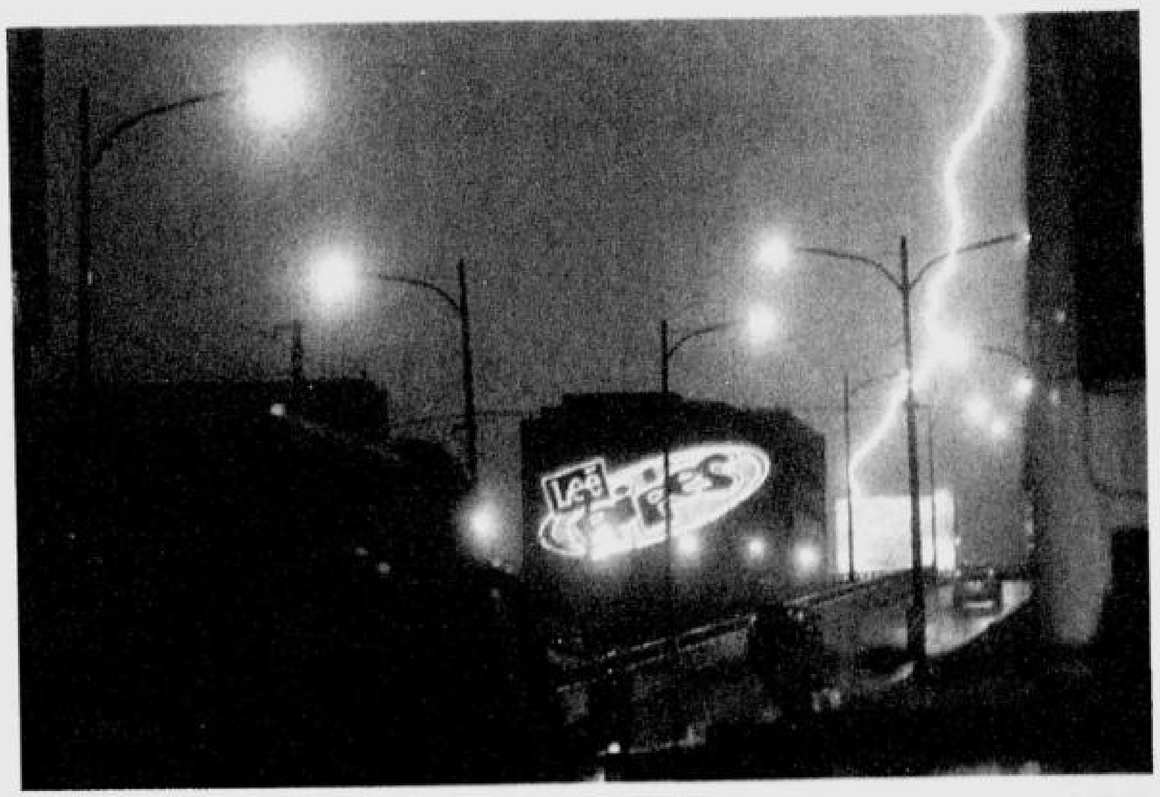
Ms Arroyo's announcement was made against the background of the country careening into political turmoil fueled by corruption scandals, rising calls from a wide sector of Philippine society for a change in leadership just a year after the presidential election, and the worrisome plunge in the President's performance rating.

Ms Arroyo's decision to elevate the Con-con initiative to the highest spot on the national agenda assumes a patina of a major priority change even equaling, if not surpassing, in importance the economic and fiscal reforms she had initiated upon the start of her second administration on June 30 last year.

The rearrangement of priority politicizes the national agenda for the next two years, with a mid-term election in 2007 transformed into a referendum of Ms Arroyo's first three years of her new term in office.

A strong impression is created that the President is using the Con-

CON-CON/ A8



SUMMER'S END

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Rain caused more than two hours of a traffic jam along Edsa on Saturday, signaling the end of summer. Weather officials forecast more rains today, the first day of classes.

Apologize or leave, RP envoy told

By Nikko Dizon

FRUSTRATED that his protests had gone unanswered, Philippine Ambassador to Israel Antonio Modena brought his complaint to the press, comparing Israeli immigration police to Nazis in the way they had been allegedly mistreating Filipinos.

Modena got an immediate response—a demand that he make an immediate public apology or pack his bags.

Modena said in a newspaper interview published Friday that the treatment of foreign workers by Israeli immigration police was comparable to that of Jews at the hands of the Gestapo secret police.

APOLOGIZE/ A21

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Light to moderate winds blowing from the southwest and west will prevail over the rest of the country with slight to moderate seas. Eastern Luzon will have rains and occasional gusty winds and coastal waters of these areas will be rough to very rough.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY ERIKA SARMIENTO, PDI RESEARCH/06/06/05

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	**Roxas**	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	**Cebu**	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	**Tacloban**	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	**Gen. Santos**	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	**Zamboanga**	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	**Cagayan de Oro**	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	**Davao**	Partly Cloudy

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Second FRONTPAGE

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2 importers face smuggle raps

By Michelle V. Remo

TWO IMPORTERS will be charged with violating the Tariff and Customs Code after investigation by the Bureau of Customs found that they had allegedly attempted to smuggle into the country P12 million worth of meat products and Italian home decor.

Customs Commissioner Alberto Lina said in an interview the filing of charges against the importers would substantiate the government's commitment to finally curb smuggling.

The importers were identified as JT Aurellano Trading, a consignee of Murano Décor of Italy, and Dragon Phoenix Frozen Food Corp., an importer of chicken dumplings from China.

Lina said the BOC would serve today warrants of seizure for the smuggled products against officials of the two firms, and that the importers would be charged before the Department of Justice in the next few days.

The two firms comprise the second batch of importers charged with smuggling under the BOC's Run After the Smugglers (RATS) campaign. RATS was conceptualized by the BOC and the Department of Finance (head agency of the BOC) under which the two agencies would conduct seizure operations or file smuggling charges every two weeks.

The first importer charged under the RATS program was Petroline Resources Inc., a customs bonded manufacturing warehouse (CBMW) that imports oil. It was charged with smuggling before the DOJ two weeks ago.

"This (going after smugglers) is really what the public expects its Bureau of Customs to do. We ought to do our jobs and so we will be running after more smugglers in the coming weeks," Lina said.

Lina said the BOC Risk Management Group found the importation documents of the two firms to be dubious and alerted customs officials to investigate the shipments.

The Italian home decor, which are high-end products costing P20,000 to P30,000 apiece, were shipped through the Manila International Container Port, while the chicken dumplings were shipped through the Port of Manila.

Jairus Paguntalan, director of the customs and intelligence investigation service, said JT Aurellano declared in its importation documents that the shipment only consisted of $2,500 worth of merchandise from Italy.

But knowing that Italy was a source of high-end home decor, the Risk Management Group recommended a spot-check of the shipment, Paguntalan said.

True enough, he said, customs authorities discovered that the shipment consisted of high-end Italian home decor items costing over P10 million.

As for Dragon Phoenix, Paguntalan said, it declared it was importing fish balls from China. But authorities found in their spot-check that what was shipped was P2 million worth of chicken dumplings.

'Destab' try continuing, Abu claims

By Luige A. del Puerto

CERTAIN sectors continue to attempt to destabilize the Arroyo administration, according to the military's top official.

Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Efren Abu also claimed yesterday that a "disinformation campaign" was being waged to put the military in an unfavorable light. The campaign was aimed at driving a wedge between military officers and enlisted men, he said.

Abu suggested the destabilization attempt was related to the disinformation campaign. But he did not identify the "certain sectors" he accused of being behind the twin moves.

"(They) are using all means fair and foul to discredit the political leadership, to incite uniformed officers to engage in mutinous acts, and to encourage the people to withdraw their allegiance from the duly constituted government," Abu said in a statement released by Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual, spokesperson of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

"In the face of these (intelligence) reports, I wish to affirm the unconditional loyalty of the AFP to the Commander In Chief, to the flag and to the Constitution with a warning that we shall resist without hesitation all clandestine efforts to undermine the unity within the AFP and break the chain of command, or any seditious acts that would threaten the existence of the republic and the AFP as an institution," Abu said.

Abu said the Armed Forces had embarked on a program of reform and endeavored to upgrade the capability of the military, but did not elaborate on the themes.

The INQUIRER recently reported on several projects started under Abu's watch.

One of these was the "upgrading" of the sidewalks inside Camp Aguinaldo that Abu had authorized. An INQUIRER source said the project cost P19 million, and noted that civilians at the camp and enlisted men were scandalized by the amount spent for the undertaking.

The Armed Forces defended the project, however, saying it cost no more than P5 million.

Erap defense team calls Bong Pineda

SUSPECTED gambling lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda is set to testify today for deposed President Joseph Estrada in the latter's trial for plunder in the Sandiganbayan.

The antigraft court's Special Division presided over by Justice Teresita de Castro summoned Pineda last Friday after Estrada's lawyers asked that he be called for the defense.

Lawyer Raymond Fortun, a member of Estrada's legal team, said the defense intended to use Pineda's earlier testimony before the House of Representatives, which is investigating the reported involvement of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo and Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo in the current jueteng scandal.

Fortun said Pineda, in his testimony, had denied having anything to do with the illegal numbers game.

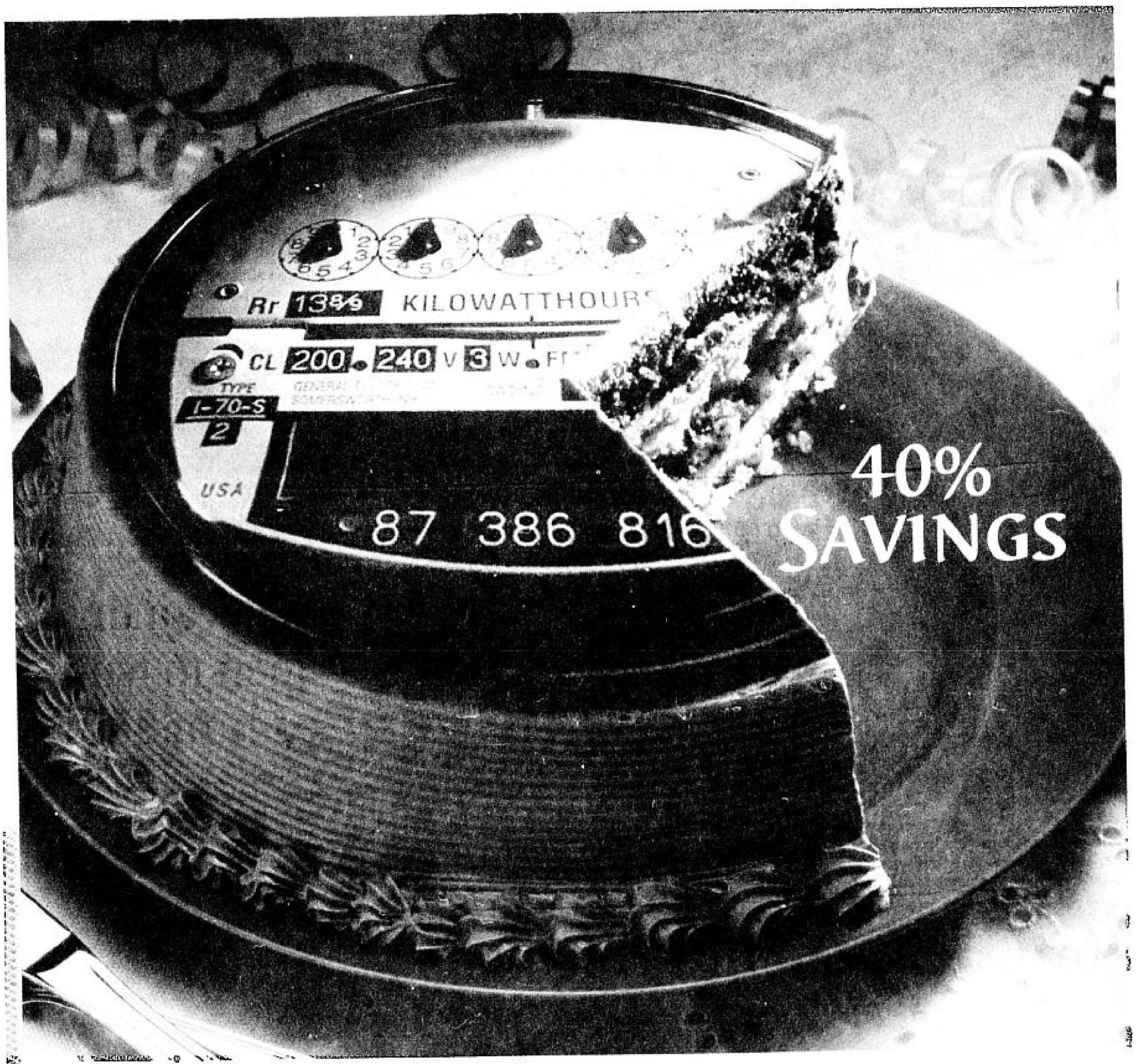
Fortun said Pineda's testimony would refute the claim made by Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson that part of the P545-million jueteng payola he had given Estrada had come from Pineda.

"If Pineda is telling the truth, how can Chavit's claim be true? We don't think Pineda would deny his own statement," Fortun said.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio said Estrada's lawyers were resorting to "impact witnesses" to persuade the court that their client was innocent. He said the testimonies of the witnesses were irrelevant to the charges faced by the former President.

Defense lawyer Jose Flaminiano vowed to call more witnesses in support of the defense, including Estrada's wife, Sen. Loi Ejercito, and son Sen. Jinggoy Estrada. *Nelson F. Flores*

WITH THE INCREASE IN POWER RATES...



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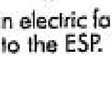
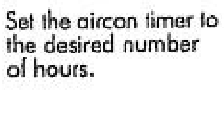
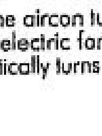


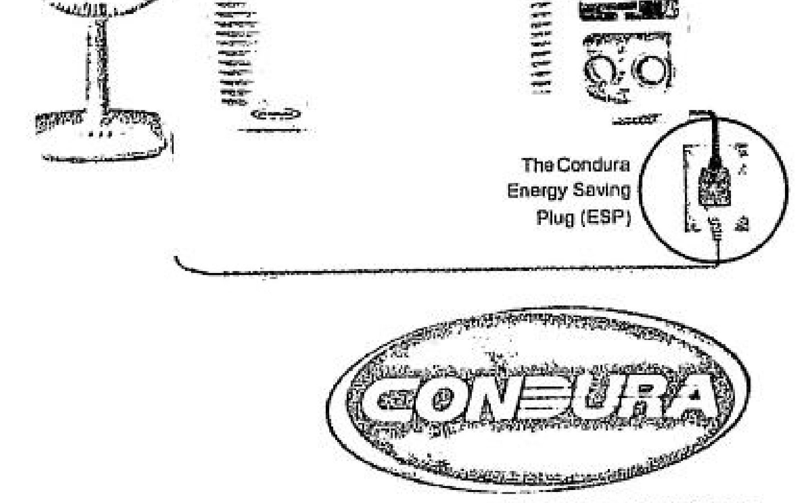
1 Plug an electric fan set to on to the ESP.



2 Set the aircon timer to the desired number of hours.



3 When the aircon turns off, the electric fan automatically turns on.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Typhoon 'Dante' skirts RP

TYPHOON "Dante," the first major weather disturbance to enter the Philippine area of responsibility at the onset of the local rainy season, will not hit landfall after all but was reported yesterday to be on its way out of the country.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), however, said it expects more rains as Dante continues to enhance the southwesterly winds that will bring precipitation over western Luzon, the Bicol region, the Visayas and western Mindanao.

The weather bureau at 10 a.m. yesterday placed Dante's center to be 850 kms east of northern Luzon. It said Dante accelerated slightly to a speed of 17 kph but was moving in a north-northeasterly direction toward the southern islands of Japan.

It was packing maximum sustained winds of up to 165 kph near the center and gustiness of up to 200 kph.

Pagasa forecasters expect Dante to be 960 kms east of extreme northern Luzon this morning. It is expected to be 1,160 kms east-northeast of extreme northern Luzon, or 570 kms southeast of Okinawa, Japan, on Tuesday morning.

The typhoon will continue to enhance the prevailing southwesterly windflow that will bring rains over most parts of the country, particularly Western Luzon, the Bicol region, the Visayas and western Mindanao.

The public and the disaster-coordinating councils concerned have been advised to take appropriate action. *Norman Bordadora*

If previous pages caused hyperacidity, this page can take it out

Stress, a big contributor to Hyperacidity

By KATRINA PRIMAVERA

NO NEWS is good news. Distressing current events may not only cause your blood pressure to shoot up but it may also be a reason for your acids to act up. Stress is but one of the many factors that contribute to hyperacidity. Smoking, physical exertion, irregular eating habits, dramatic weight gain, lying down too soon after a meal and pregnancy hormones are also common causes of a hyperacidity attack. Hyperacidity happens when there is an excessive secretion of acid in the stomach. It is not a disease but rather a collection of symptoms, including discomfort or burning in the upper abdomen which may also cause nausea. For relief from these discomforts, the most common over-the-counter remedy is an antacid.

Different terms and varying degrees of hyperacidity

HYPERACIDITY, locally known as *pangangasim ng sikmura*, is the excessive secretion of hydrochloric acid in the stomach. This imbalance causes a burning sensation or a slight churning in the stomach, which could also involve the esophagus and part of the small intestines.

Peptic ULCERS: refer to actual open sores or "wounds" in the inner lining of the stomach or small intestine or esophagus. Many ulcers result in a gnawing pain in the stomach and are caused by a bacteria called H. pylori. Other causes or factors which may aggravate ulcers include long term use of certain pain relievers, smoking, excessive alcohol consumption and stress. While over-the-counter medications may relieve the pain of ulcers, a doctor should be consulted so that proper treatment directed at healing the ulcer can be started.

INDIGESTION ("dyspepsia"). This is a general term often used to describe a collection of uncomfortable abdominal symptoms which often occur after eating. The cause of indigestion can't be attributed to one particular thing and is often times not serious. This includes discomfort or burning in the upper abdomen, nausea and a bloated feeling that belching may relieve. This can stem from a temporary problem such as overeating or a stressful event rather than relating it to a disease. It is a common disorder of the upper gastrointestinal system which includes the esophagus, stomach and the first part of the small intestine. The proper diet, exercise, stress management and anti-acid medications can all help with the symptoms.

HEARTBURN. When the lower sphincter valve of the esophagus relaxes or is weak, stomach acid can flow back up into the esophagus and irritate the esophagus resulting in "heartburn". The sensation is similar to regurgitation while experiencing a sour taste in the mouth and leaving a burning sensation behind the breastbone. Acid regurgitation or reflux can even cause hoarseness of the voice , coughing, and worsening of asthma.

TREATMENT. For quick acid neutralization, New Mylanta Rolltabs (CALCIUM CARBONATE + MAGNESIUM HYDROXIDE). Mylanta Rolltabs comes in chewable and great tasting flavors to aid in the rapid neutralization of acid to start relief in seconds. It's portable and comes in different flavors giving you sweet relief in no time, anytime. Don't forget to consult your doctor if symptoms persist, are severe, or keep recurring. Some of the things which may aggravate or result in heartburn: Stress, smoking, tight clothing, physical exertion, weight gain, lying down too soon after a meal and pregnancy.

Hyperacidity Tales

" I love coffee. I used to have 7-10 cups a day. Thing is with coffee, I would lose my appetite and end up skipping meals so I would get the worst hyperacidity attacks. I would feel as if there was this big ball burning inside my tummy." -Paul, 25

"Grabe ang hyperacidity ko. Pasulpot sulpot na lang. Para sa akin dumarating na lang yan ng walang warning. May isang beses naglalakad lang ako sa daan tapos may naramdaman akong sakit na biglaan sa tiyan. Ang tindi at ang lakas ng tama, napaupo ako sa daan bigla." -Lawrence, 24

"Ang pinakamatindi kong hyperacidity attack ay nung kumain ako ng manggang hilaw sa umaga. Hindi pa ako nag-aalmusal, so wala pang laman tiyan ko. Ay ang sakit talaga." -Mia, 24

" Hyperacidity is such a hassle. The worst part about it is that you never know when it's gonna hit you. There was this one time I was out with my girl friends and started getting spasms in my stomach. At first, I thought it was just gas or something I ate but the pain got worse as I was having my drinks. So not only did I have to pass up on the drinks, the pain became unbearable so I went home and missed out on what would have been a perfectly good night out." -Karen, 35

"I would get acidic once in a while but for some reason, it's more frequent and more intense during exam week. Things are a little bit more busy at that time. I like to go out kasi. Hanging with the boys and spending time with my girlfriend so tendency is for me to study last minute. I think the cramming and the pressure just aggravates my hyperacidity. Stress, you know?" -Joey 17,

"Hindi ako familiar sa mga sakit na ganyan. Basta iniisip ko lagi, lilipas lang yan. Pero may isang beses na nakaranas ako ng sakit sa tiyan. Ay, kakaiba talaga. Hindi ko siya maipinta. Parang may mainit at mahapding bulateng umiikot sa loob ng tiyan ko. Sinubukan kong itulog pero sa tindi ng sakit, hindi ako makatulog. Akala ko nagkaka-dysmenorrhea na ko , pero sus, hyperacidity pala siya" -Tiffany, 24

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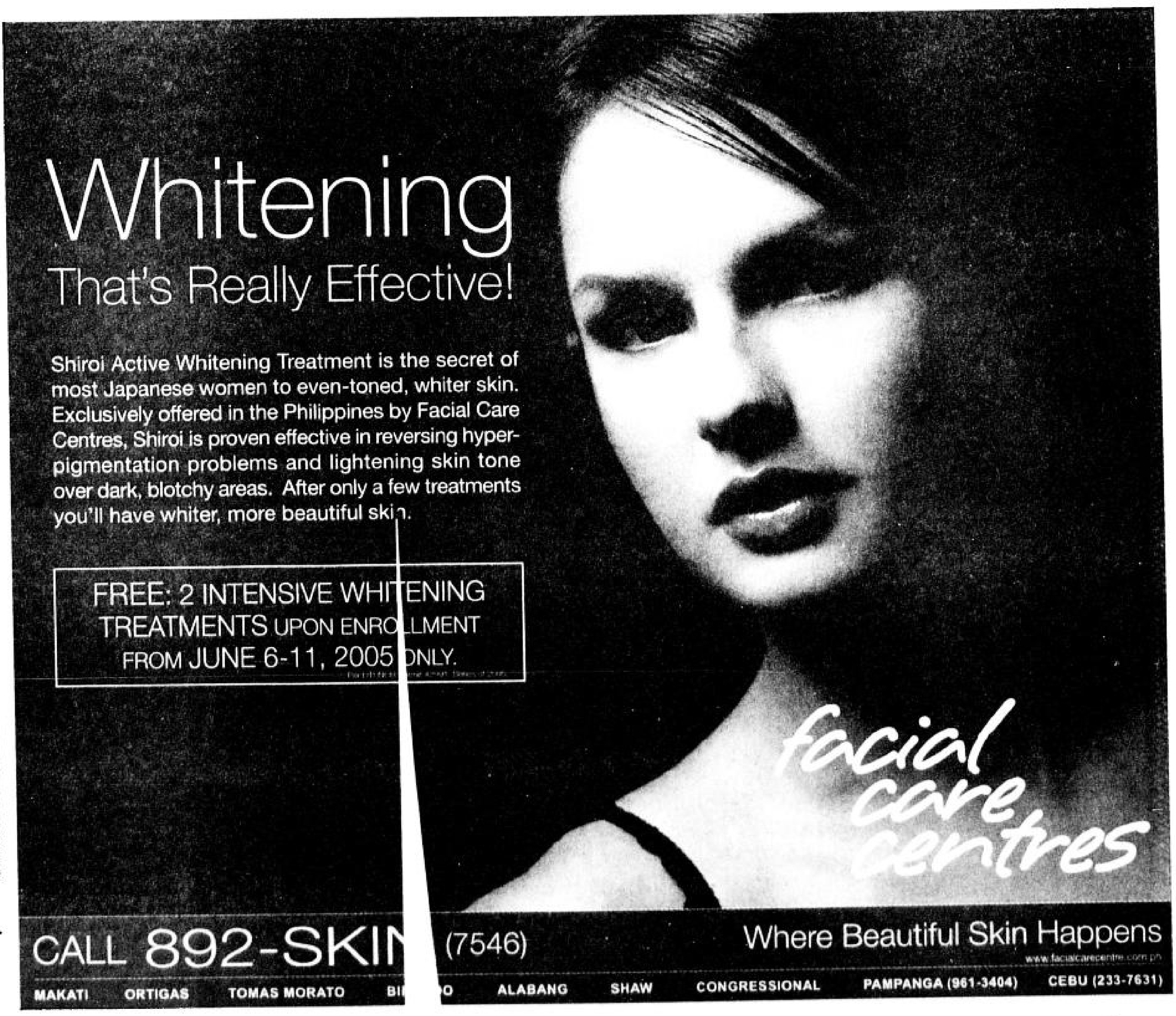

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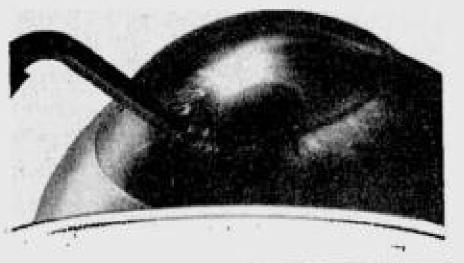

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Classroom woes ease ...

From page A1

Casiño chairs the House subcommittee on students and teachers welfare and is vice chair of the House committee on basic education.

Quoting Edukasyon Ngayon, a news bulletin published by his office, Casiño cited data furnished to Congress by the DepEd which showed that the number of elementary school pupils this school year rose to 12.8 million from 12.23 million last year.

The number of high school enrollees increased from 5.04 million to 5.31 million.

From private to public

Rep. Rolando Andaya Jr., chair of the House appropriations committee, said enrollment in public schools increased by 1.4 million in just four years, partly due to the "migration" of private school students to the free government-run schools.

Shortages of classrooms and teachers and higher enrollment figures would not be a welcome relief to students who are already suffering from low proficiencies in math and science subjects, said Casiño.

Public school teachers who have never had a salary raise since 2001 could not be expected to teach quality education under the trees or in dilapidated schoolrooms in many rural villages.

Faced with this grim reality, elementary and high school students would most likely give President Macapagal-Arroyo "lower marks than what she got from the last survey," said Casiño.

The lawmaker noted that statistics on growing enrollment numbers in the basic levels contrasted with Ms Arroyo's diminishing budget for the DepEd.

Budget cuts

"Young Filipinos would not be too happy to find out that last year's shortages in teachers, seats, classrooms and books have not been sufficiently addressed by Congress and Ms Arroyo," he said.

Casiño said that the shortages reflected the Arroyo administration's low regard for basic education because "the DepEd budget under GMA had gone down both in nominal and real terms."

The President approved a budget cut for the DepEd, from P107.50 billion in 2004 to P102.62 billion this year, he pointed out.

"Students might even go to the extent of asking for Ms Arroyo's impeachment because the budgets she's approving for basic education are just 11 to 13 percent of the total annual appropriations—a far cry from funds allotted for debt payments. The situation is clearly violative of the constitutional provision that gives top priority to education in government spending," he said.

Jampacked nation

"The fact is what's equivalent to the population of a medium-sized city is added to the number of public school students every year," according to Andaya, who attributed the problem to the "blistering" 2.3 percent annual population growth rate.

"What is made in the bedroom tonight would appear in the classroom eight years hence," he said. "Jampacked schools reflect a jampacked nation."

To house the additional enrollees, Andaya said 3,000 classrooms must be built, at 50 students per class, with two shifts of classes per room, using the current DepEd formula of maximizing classroom use by squeezing two classes per day in each.

At P400,000 per classroom, the tab would amount to P1.2 billion, said Andaya.

More classrooms built

Abad said some 6,000 classrooms worth P2 billion were being built by the national government. Another 3,000 classrooms will be built through the efforts of local government units and through other DepEd programs such as the Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP), Secondary Education Development and Improvement Project (Sedip), and the Basic Education Assistance for Mindanao (BEAM).

To decongest the most crowded public high schools, 375,000 deserving students were enrolled in private schools. A total of P1.5 billion has been allocated for these students who would be going to 1,620 private schools.

Schools that were hit by typhoons late last year have also been rehabilitated through Sagip Eskwela. Through this program, 750 classrooms were repaired and 128 new classrooms built from funds donated by the private sector.

Some P142 million in contributions was donated to Sagip Eskwela at this time.

During National Schools Maintenance Week last month, over 20,000 schools participated in Brigada Eskwela and generated over P1 billion worth of school maintenance and repairs made by participating communities.

New school buildings were also built through the P 1.1 billion contribution of private companies to DepEd's Adopt-A-School program. *With a report from Luige A. del Puerto*

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Better learning ...

From page A1

ers' Congress here last week discovered that their rigid teaching methods were wrong for this generation of Filipino pupils, which may account for the low number of students who pass their subjects each year.

About 80 percent, or 960 of the 1,200 participants in this year's congress at Teachers' Camp here, acknowledged that they had made their pupils memorize by rote—math, language and science lessons—when their pupils actually learned better in a more interactive and "fun" environment, a survey conducted during the congress showed.

Henry Tenedero, an alternative education expert assisting the Department of Education and who administered the survey, said results showed that Filipino teachers should come to school in more colorful attires and should smile when introducing arithmetic to students, many of whom fear numbers.

According to the survey results, teachers should also learn to dance, sing or mime lessons because pupils absorb information when they are supplemented by sound, engaging visual images and even snacks, Tenedero said.

Teachers could also deputize one parent or two to assist him or her in class, the survey showed.

A jeepney driver, Tenedero said, could help teach math in his child's class by explaining how he makes change for jeepney fare. This way, students could learn the practical application of their lessons in school, he said.

Tenedero, who is president of the Baguio-based Center for Learning and Teaching Style Inc., said copies of the survey's results would be given to various schools in the country because it would help teachers cope with their newfound freedom.

Education Secretary Florencio Abad had issued a memorandum granting all public school teachers the leeway to select appropriate teaching methods that are best suited to their communities.

EQ vs IQ

Abad also turned over the budget and management chores of public schools to their principals and their host communities.

These reforms could be more effective if teachers understood how their pupils absorbed their classroom lessons, Tenedero said.

He said the survey helped determine the profile of most Filipino pupils' "learning styles."

The survey was based on an alternative testing mechanism called the Dunn and Dunn Test, named after American educators Kenneth and Rita Dunn, which detects the emotional quotient (EQ) and multiple intelligence of students.

Tenedero said the test showed that most teachers used the left-brain technique of teaching, when Filipino children responded better with their right brain.

Left vs right brain

He said this was based on the theory that the two different sides of the brain control two different patterns of thinking.

The left brain is "analytical" because it sees the world sequentially, logically and objectively. The right brain is "global," according to Tenedero, because "it sees the forest for the trees," has more random responses to stimuli and is more subjective.

He said the 1,200 teachers from both private and public schools in the country were asked to respond to nine questions. These questions were designed to find out the best learning environment for Filipino children.

"*Lumalabas* (it turns out), [the] majority of the teachers surveyed taught using analytical methods, when their pupils were more global. So you can see that the teachers were unable to reach their students [effectively]," Tenedero said.

Filipino students apparently learned well when they had background sound or music, when they studied in informal environments and were allowed to munch on snacks.

Learn from the Net

Tenedero said the teachers also noted that students preferred to study with bright lights, with a group and with more study breaks.

He said children would respond to a multitude of stimuli, like memorizing math formulas, "when all of their senses are engaged."

He suggested that teachers could study why children learned more when they visited Internet cafés.

"We should study why children learn more information from the Internet than in the classrooms. There is sound, there is participation and there are light snacks," he said.

"Most children can master most topics and most subjects in classrooms. Their academic difficulties begin when their teachers do not teach according to the way they learn," Tenedero pointed out in his book, "What Parents Need to Know About Learning."

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Napocor sale behind sked, official admits

THE COUNTRY is unlikely to meet its goal of selling 50 percent of the power generating assets of state-owned National Power Corp. (Napocor) by the end of the month, a senior official said on Sunday.

Froilan Tampinco, vice president at the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp., said that even if the government sold a 600-megawatt coal-fired power plant later this month, it would not be enough to meet its target of selling half of Napocor's generating assets by end-June.

By the end of this year, the government had targeted to sell 70 percent of the generating assets of Napocor.

Tampinco said his agency planned to speed up the privatization of other plants for the rest of the year by allowing buyers to conduct preliminary reviews of the plants even before the formal start of the sales process.

Napocor, the single biggest strain on the Philippines' shaky finances, plans to sell more than 30 power plants and lease out the state-owned national power transmission facilities to raise up to $5 billion to reduce the firm's debts and losses.

The government has so far sold six power plants—five small hydropower plants and a 600-megawatt coal-fired plant—since March last year. The plants sold accounted for 11 percent of the generating capacity of Napocor, owner of most of the country's power facilities, Tampinco said.

Tampinco attributed the delay to lackluster interest in the non-operating plants, the power supply contracts between Napocor and electricity distributors, and the management and operation of the plants during the transition period.

He said his agency had rescheduled the sale of five non-operating power plants, with a total capacity of 609.3 megawatts, for later this year instead of the first quarter due to lack of interest from buyers.

The government also planned to sell this year seven hydropower plants, five geothermal power plants and three oil-fired plants, with a total combined capacity of 3,650.3 megawatts. *Reuters*

Peace seen in South by year-end

SINGAPORE—The Philippine government hopes to reach an agreement to end a decades-long Muslim separatist rebellion in Mindanao before the end of the year, Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz said here Sunday.

Cruz told an Asia-Pacific conference attended by defense ministers and top military officials that a peace pact with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) would isolate the group's members who have been giving sanctuary to local and foreign militants.

Government and MILF negotiators have been holding Malaysian-brokered peace talks since 2003.

Cruz said the negotiators were moving to iron out differences on ancestral land claims and self-governance issues in areas where the MILF has a presence on Mindanao.

The rebels have demanded the rights to their ancestral homeland, which would traditionally mean Mindanao, the country's second largest island where they have been waging a war for independence since 1978.

MILF officials had said they were willing to compromise on the demand, but did not indicate what they were prepared to accept.

The government hopes the issue of "ancestral domain" will be settled under the framework of a law covering the rights of indigenous peoples, while self-governance could be modeled on an existing Muslim autonomous region in Mindanao.

"These positive developments give us hope that a peace agreement will be reached before the end of this year," said Cruz in a speech on the final day of the Asia Security Conference organized by the London-based Institute for International Strategic Studies.

A peace agreement is seen as being crucial in the fight against terrorism, as MILF bases in Mindanao have been identified as training grounds for militant groups such as the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), the Southeast Asian affiliate of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terror network.

"A peace agreement with the MILF will result in the demobilization and disarmament of most of its members," Cruz said.

"We are also hopeful that a peace agreement with the MILF will draw the line that will separate its moderate members, who will return to the fold of the law, from its rogue elements who may have been providing support and sanctuary to local and foreign terrorists.

"Once isolated, the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) could focus on neutralizing these rogue elements," he said.

Singapore Home Affairs Minister Wong Kan Seng said in March that the JI and allied terror groups may be using the Mindanao training camps to build networks and share their deadly expertise.

Late last month, the MILF opened its main training camp to foreign diplomats and vowed to hunt down Islamic militants on a government wanted list as a sign of goodwill.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said the group had agreed to hunt down 53 militants and MILF officials were now "validating" the list.

The roster included the names of renegade Muslim rebels with possible links to the JI and another extremist group, the Abu Sayyaf.

The MILF, which has a 12,000-strong guerrilla force and thousands of sympathizers, was left out in a peace pact reached between Manila and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in 1996.

Under that peace accord, the government gave the MNLF autonomy over several provinces and absorbed more than 5,000 guerrillas into the Philippine military as officers and enlisted personnel.

Cruz said Sunday these former MNLF rebels were fighting "side by side" with Filipino troops in operations against the Abu Sayyaf.

He said the strength of the Abu Sayyaf, linked to banditry and the kidnapping of foreigners, had fallen to "less than 400" from "more than 1,200. *AFP*

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Poor English skills bode ill for Pinoys in int'l arena

AN EDUCATION system that churns out poor-quality college graduates who can barely speak English is handicapping the Philippines as it tries to match India and ride a global outsourcing boom to lift millions out of poverty.

Despite a huge potential pool for the call center and business process outsourcing industries from a rapidly growing population of 84 million, experts warned there were no quick fixes in the poorly-funded educational system.

Jose Xavier Gonzales, chief executive of C-Cubed Services, said the Philippines had an ethnic prescription which should have given it an advantage in outsourcing where India is the runaway leader of the field.

"We think American, feel Spanish and act Asian," said Gonzales, whose business is one of the industry's mid-sized players in the Philippines.

Gonzales was speaking at an outsourcing forum sponsored by Development Bank of the Philippines and held here last week where business leaders were told that while labor was cheap, the quality was poor.

"Our country faces a very dire situation in terms of getting the basic education sector to provide a much more solid foundation of basic education competencies essential for global competitiveness," Education Secretary Florencio Abad told the forum.

National achievement tests given to graduating high school students in the 2004 school year showed that only 6.59 percent could read, speak and comprehend English well enough to enter college.

Some 44.25 percent had no English skills at all.

More school years

In a bid to catch up with international standards, Abad said the government would make pre-school attendance compulsory and ask Congress to lengthen high school education by at least one year.

"As the world shifts deeper and deeper into the information age, education will be essential for a job," said Manila-based business consultant Peter Wallace. "You can put a poorly educated person on a production line, but you can't put them behind a computer."

"The Philippines has few production lines. Agriculture needs only basic education, but leaves people destitute," Wallace said.

He said the Philippines was attracting companies in need of computer literate employees, but the qualified talent pool was already overstretched.

This was highlighted at C-Cubed where Gonzales said 48,000 applications for call service jobs were received last year, but only 1,089 people made the grade.

"We have long neglected, under-invested, mismanaged and over-politicized our vast network of public schools and it will take a long time for us to turn this situation around," Abad said.

Talent pool shallow

Gonzales said this year's demand should be around 27,000 call center seats, way above the qualified pool of about 12,000 people from a national total of 380,000 graduates produced annually by the country's tertiary institutions.

Once inside the door, outsource workers undergo three months intensive training on culture, geography and "accent neutralization" to round off their spoken English and make themselves understood to customers from across the globe.

Call centers, back office services, digitalization of medical records, animation and software development now employ 114,000 people in the Philippines, generating annual revenue of $2.022 billion (P111.21 billion).

Outsourcing for call centers alone produces revenue of $1 billion a year.

By comparison, the semiconductor and electronics industry generates $27 billion in annual revenue, accounting for around 70 percent of exports and employs around 376,000 people.

They earn salaries of P10,000-12,000 (about $184-220) a month which is about half the wages earned in outsourcing.

The government hopes to triple employment in call center outsourcing to about 300,000 over the next three years, with revenues expected to also triple, to $3 billion.

Proactive role

But a frustrated Gonzales said this was unlikely although the number of call center positions had risen dramatically to 69,000 from just 4,500 in 2001, while back office operations, including accounting and airline ticket reservations for foreign companies, accounted for another 25,000 jobs.

Amid the dearth of qualified people, the outsourcing industry is making do by hiring professionals from outside the industry, luring "career-shifters" with higher pay.

Gonzales said this pool was also considered extremely shallow and had forced companies to cut back on hiring which had slowed growth in the sector.

And Abad added the deficiencies of Filipino college graduates had been planted even before grade school.

"We were shocked to find out about a health department survey that found 30 percent of school-age children were undernourished," he said. This delays brain development and seriously inhibits their intelligence.

Wallace, citing government data, said out of 100 primary school pupils, 33 drop out of grade school and only 45 finish secondary school. Of these, only 26 enter college and just seven graduate.

AFP

DPWH replaces official

THE CHIEF of the Department of Public Works and Highways in the National Capital Region who was suspended by the Ombudsman for failing a lifestyle check has been effectively removed from his post with the appointment of a replacement.

Named new DPWH-NCR director was engineer Robert Lala who used to head the Camanava flood control project office.

Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane appointed Lala "effective immediately" in a June 2 special order.

Lala is expected to report to his new office this week.

Before his assignment, Lala was in charge of implementing the foreign-funded flood control project for the Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas and Valenzuela (Camanava) area.

The Office of the Ombudsman last month ordered Josefino Rigor's suspension after finding that he may have amassed P57 million in unexplained wealth and for failing to declare several properties in his statement of assets, liabilities and net worth.

Rigor is also facing complaints of grave misconduct, dishonesty and falsification of public documents.

Among the properties he allegedly failed to declare were more than 20 parcels of land in Tarlac, a building in Sampaloc, Manila, and two vehicles, one of which was in his wife's name. *Leila B. Salaverria*

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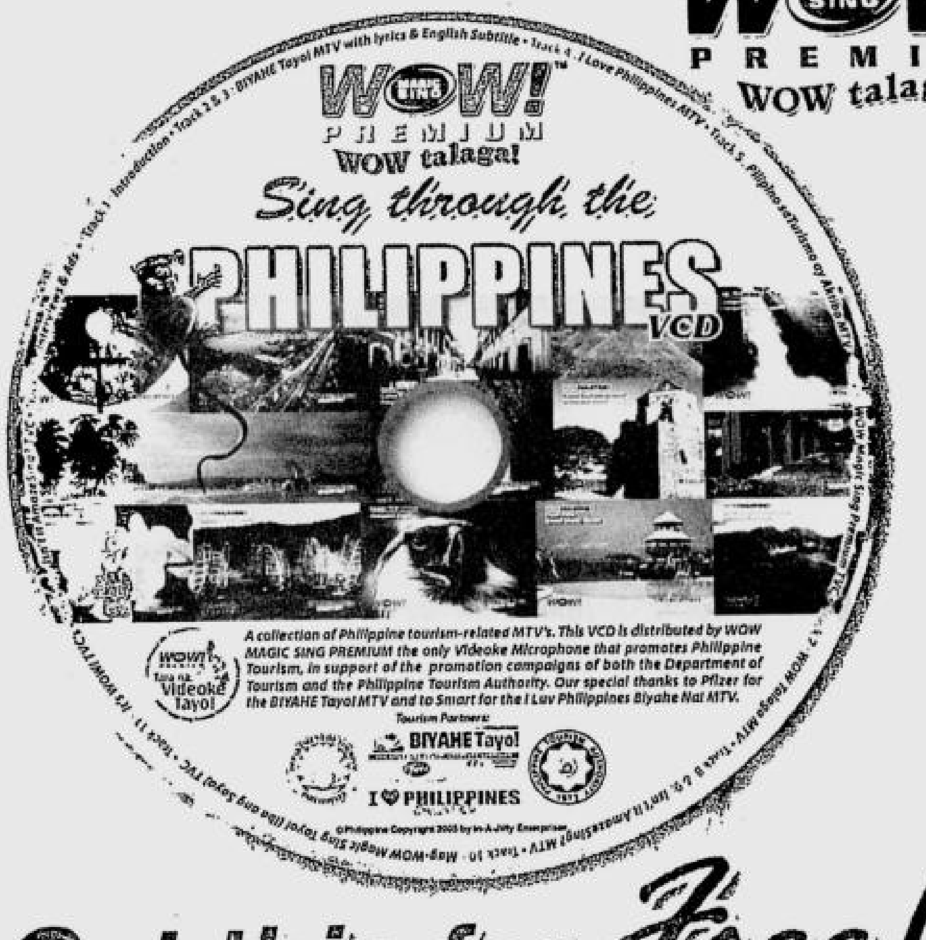
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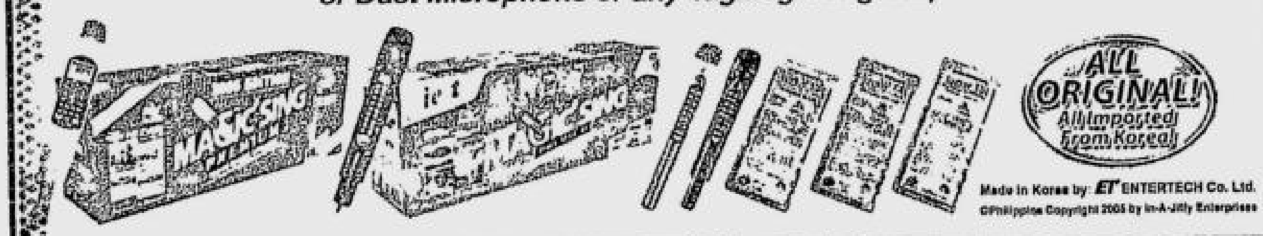

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Abusive personnel said to be symptom of poor health system

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE ABUSE experienced by some patients at the Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital in Manila is but a reflection of the deteriorating health care system in the country, according to a cause-oriented group.

Cases of verbal abuse by some doctors and nurses are also common at other government hospitals where the employees are overworked and grossly underpaid, said Dr. Gene Nisperos, secretary general of Health Alliance for Democracy (HEAD).

While such working conditions should never be made an excuse, Nisperos said they usually push health workers to the limits of human patience.

"Believe me, the so-called abuses are common, even in some private hospitals," Nisperos told the INQUIRER in an interview. "But the stories are generally anecdotal."

Nisperos, a graduate of the University of the Philippines medical school, said he himself had witnessed colleagues berating patients, apparently due to exhaustion, in the past.

"You can't expect a doctor dealing with, say, 36 patients who has not eaten or taken a minute's rest to have the same level of civility in dealing with all of those patients," Nisperos said. "But again, this is not an excuse to maltreat patients. But doctors could also use a little understanding."

In separate interviews with the INQUIRER, two health workers and a former nursing trainee had narrated how some doctors and nurses at Fabella cursed at and scolded laboring mothers, apparently over their failure to practice birth control.

One of the sources recalled seeing a nurse pull a mother by the pubic hair to force her into a better position on the delivery table. Other mothers were allegedly made to deliver without benefit of anesthesia.

Nisperos said it was not impossible for some of the hospital's doctors and nurses to lose their cool, considering that their numbers were never enough to deal with so many patients.

Citing a recent HEAD study on Fabella, he said the 700-bed hospital admits more than 600 patients a day, excluding outpatient cases.

"So don't be surprised if you see three or four mothers sharing a single bed," he said. "Sometimes, patients have no choice but to stay seated along the corridors."

To deal with all the patients, Fabella has only 898 employees, of whom 726 have regular status, he said.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, June 6, 2005
10th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: 2 Cor 1:1-7
Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain. He sat down and his disciples gathered around him. Then he spoke and began to teach them:

Fortunate are those who are poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Fortunate are those who mourn, they shall be comforted.

Fortunate are the gentle, they shall possess the land.

Fortunate are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied.

Fortunate are the merciful, for they shall find mercy.

Fortunate are those with a pure heart, for they shall see God.

Fortunate are those who work for peace, they shall be called children of God.

Fortunate are those who are persecuted for the cause of justice, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Fortunate are you, when people insult you and persecute you and speak all kinds of evil against you because you are my followers. Be glad and joyful, for a great reward is kept for you in God. This is how this people persecuted the prophets who lived before you.

Commentary

Here is the core of Jesus' teaching on who is in the kingdom of heaven already—the poor and those persecuted for justice and the gospel's sake, and who will be in the kingdom one day: those who are mourning, the gentle (non-violent), those who hunger and thirst for justice; those who practice mercy and live with pure hearts and who make peace their single-hearted love. We are blessed when we live in this way, singled out and proclaimed to be God's own people. These are practices and one builds upon the other, beginning with the practice of the virtue of poverty—living with less so that others might live, in honor of God who cares for all… then we mourn so many suffering and become non-violent, living without harm to any other, ceaselessly striving for justice for all, forgiving of all others, including our enemies who need even more than forgiveness-mercy; and seeing who God truly is and loving all for God's sake and living as Jesus did, making peace through the blood of Eucharist and our sufferings bound to His own—and often we then know persecution and rejection because we are associated with Jesus our Teacher. Where are we now? How blessed are we? Are we in the kingdom even now?

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Con-con call GMA way of defusing tensions

From page A1

con card to deflect public unrest and draw the country away from the precipitous path of extra-constitutional methods of leadership change, such as another people power movement, or even worse, military intervention or takeover that is increasingly being promoted by restive groups in the Armed Forces.

The President said that constitutional change was an instrument that would promote her medium-term economic plan. Constitutional change may help such an objective but it does not explain the urgency Ms Arroyo has given to the Con-con issue.

The President's concrete proposals will be unveiled in her State of the Nation Address in July but at this point, what is most important is not the content of the Con-con agenda or whether the mode of change is through a constitutional convention or constituent assembly.

The most significant fact is that Ms Arroyo has grabbed the bull of the constitutional change issue by the horns. She has decided she could no longer evade it and has stopped temporizing with it.

This means that the time for confronting the long-postponed constitutional change issue has arrived.

The comment that the President has decided to call a convention to divert attention away from the Senate "jueteng" inquiry, in which her husband, First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, and son, Rep. Mikey Arroyo, have been accused of receiving payoffs from illegal gambling lords, is too parochial and too petty to explain her Con-con call.

Constitutional change is a major policy approach that serves larger purposes than just diverting public away from the jueteng scandal.

While the scandal is politically damaging to the administration, it is overshadowed by the larger issues of the fiscal crisis, public unrest fueled by inflation and rising prices, stepping up economic growth and making the country catch up with the more dynamic economies in the region, or of ending the national malaise.

It is easier to argue that Ms Arroyo was prompted to call for constitutional change by the fact that it is a political option that offers the country an exit mechanism from the series of political stalemates that have debilitated it with the nondelivery of results on reform initiatives.

These stalemates, inherent in the present system of checks and balances in the presidential system, have been responsible for the meager production of results from both the executive and legislative departments.

With Ms Arroyo's performance ratings plummeting to their lowest under any administration since 1986 and with fiscal reforms likely to increase the tax burdens on the people, the President would need a miracle to reverse this downslide in the immediate term.

Impatient sectors, including those led by disgruntled retired generals and by highly politicized Catholic bishops, have fed on the jueteng scandal, the public unrest over hard living conditions and the breakdown of law and order (a symptom of hard times), to issue calls for a change of leadership and even a coup d'etat.

My assessment is that unless an extraordinarily violent event breaks out of the jueteng scandal, the people are not in the mood to go to the streets for another people power on behalf of the bishops or retired generals who offer no program or relief to alleviate pain and suffering.

The retired generals have not offered a credible leadership alternative. The military is not as united in withdrawing support from the President as it was in 2001 and has no one in charge who can pull them together.

Recent surveys show that the military is perceived to be worse than the usual suspects of corruption—the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs.

Corruption scandals in the military have foreclosed the emergence from that group of a credible leadership less corrupt than that in civilian sector.

So the bishops, if they continue to press their calls for another people power, had better be sure whether they can find in the military inspiring leaders and whether jueteng is a sufficient cause for a military withdrawal of support for the much-maligned administration.

The bishops could be replacing one set of civilian crooks with military crooks.

In 2001, the military high command was unified under Gen. Angelo Reyes in his defection decision. The military doesn't have the equivalent of Reyes in the high command today to pull the troops together.

Those calling for an immediate replacement of the present administration crave for the "right moment" to start a mass upheaval in the streets.

Right moments do not come through wishful thinking. They come through the convergence of right events—not through prayers of bishops turned street activists.

The logic of events tells us that at the rate the administration is going downhill, and unless it does something dramatic to reverse the slide, it will lose its congressional majorities in 2007.

Such an event would result in a lame-duck presidency in which the revitalized opposition could regain control of the national agenda.

Constitutional change thus becomes a viable and reasonable option to avert another round of impasse in a post-2007 scenario, with a crippled Arroyo presidency.

Constitutional change becomes a formula for Ms Arroyo to defuse the tensions now bearing on her administration. Constitutional change will also offer the impatient public a course to avoid a new bout of deadlocks and to offer a way to cut short the Arroyo presidency without a coup and within a constitutional framework.

The President's plan to call a Con-con is a conflict-defusing approach to change in which opposition figures now locked out of power are given a new terrain to compete for power as prime minister or MPs under a parliamentary system.

Similarly, a constitutional revision could also lead to the curtailment of the President's term by 2007, while also not closing the door for her to compete for power in a parliamentary system.

So, we may not have to wait for a new leader until 2010. Many cannot wait that long.

Those who are not offered a means to end Ms Arroyo's term within a constitutional framework will be forced to continue to demand immediate change.

Thus, the President's plan to call a Con-con offers a way out of a political cul de sac. Filipinos go to the streets if they are locked into a dead end.

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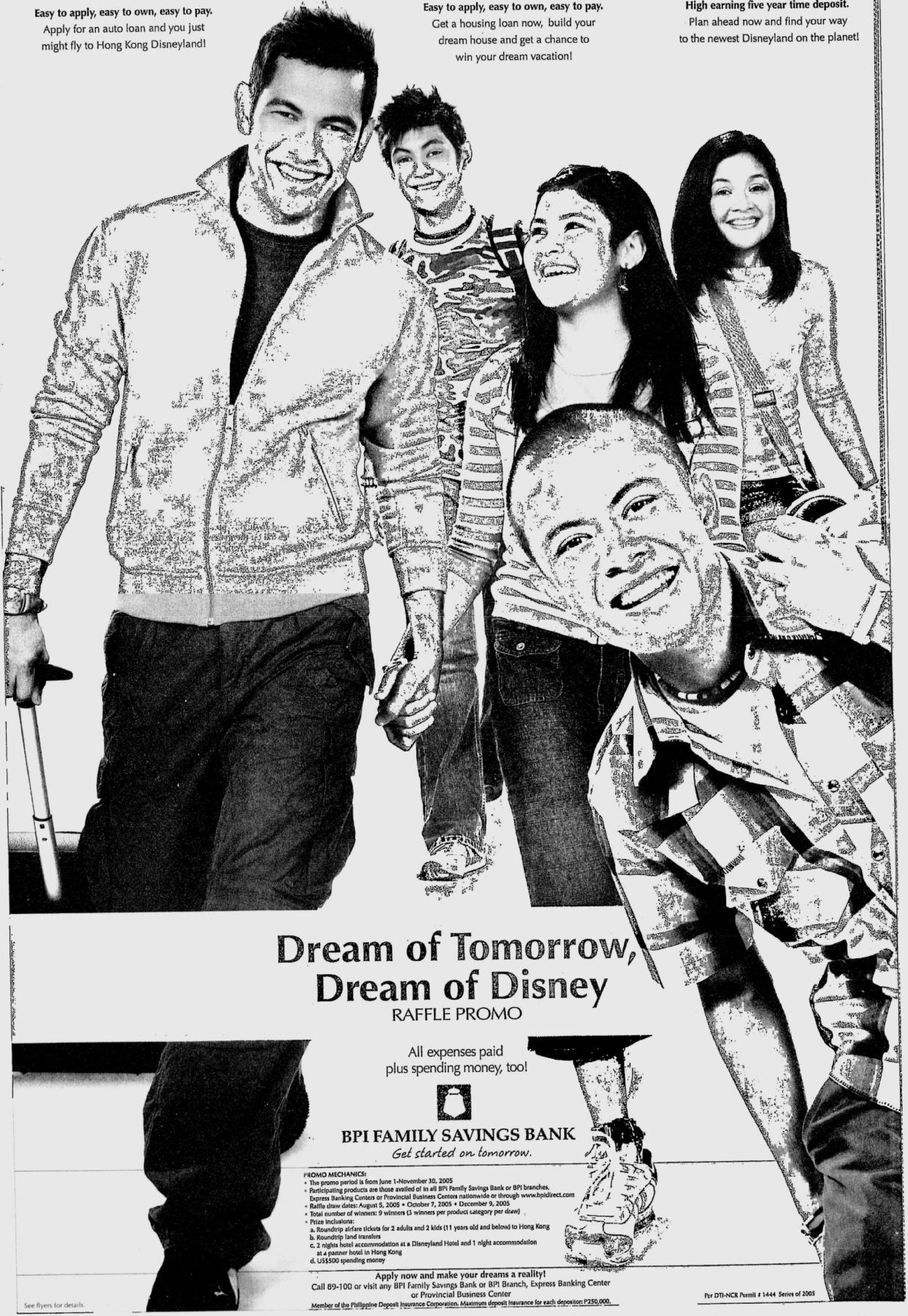

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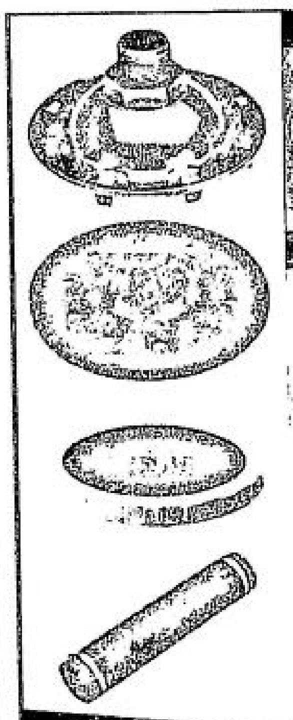

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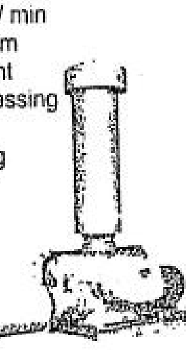

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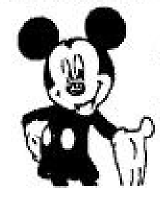

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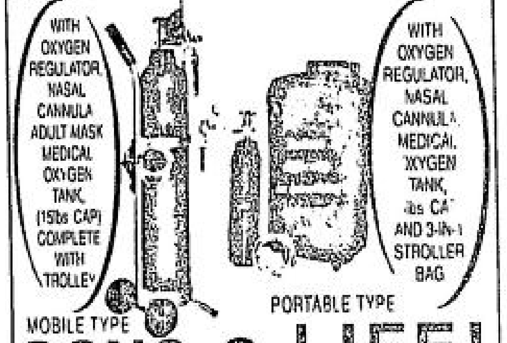
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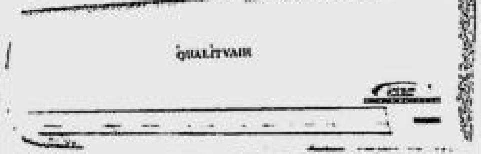

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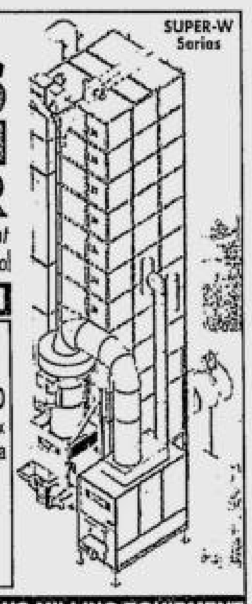

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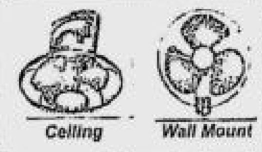

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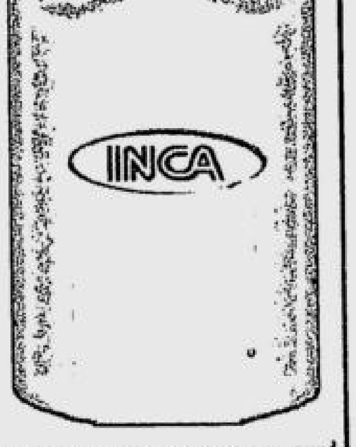

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

GITMO BAY FALLOUT

US blames 'few' jailers, media in Koran uproar

CRAWFORD, Texas—The White House sought on Saturday to minimize damage from new revelations about US personnel mishandling the Koran at the Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, prison, accusing a few people of violating policy and the media of blowing "isolated incidents" out of proportion.

It was the administration's latest broadside against the press over abuses at Guantanamo. Last month, the White House attacked Newsweek and went so far as to ask the magazine to help repair damage to America's image.

The US military on Friday released details about five cases in which the Islamic holy book was kicked, stepped on and soaked in water.

In one case, a guard's urine splashed onto a detainee and his Koran. Southern Command said a guard urinated near an air vent and "the wind blew his urine through the vent" and onto a detainee and his Koran.

"It is unfortunate that some have chosen to take out of context a few isolated incidents by a few individuals without making clear the policies and practices of the overwhelming vast majority, the 99.9 percent, of our military personnel," said White House spokesperson Scott McClellan.

McClellan said he was referring to "some media coverage and some commentary."

"There were three times as many confirmed incidents of (Koran) abuse by detainees, a number which were far worse than the few isolated incidents of mishandling by a few individuals that violated military policies and practices," McClellan added.

"The military expects its high standards to be met, and does not tolerate or condone it when individuals do not—as this report makes clear," McClellan said.

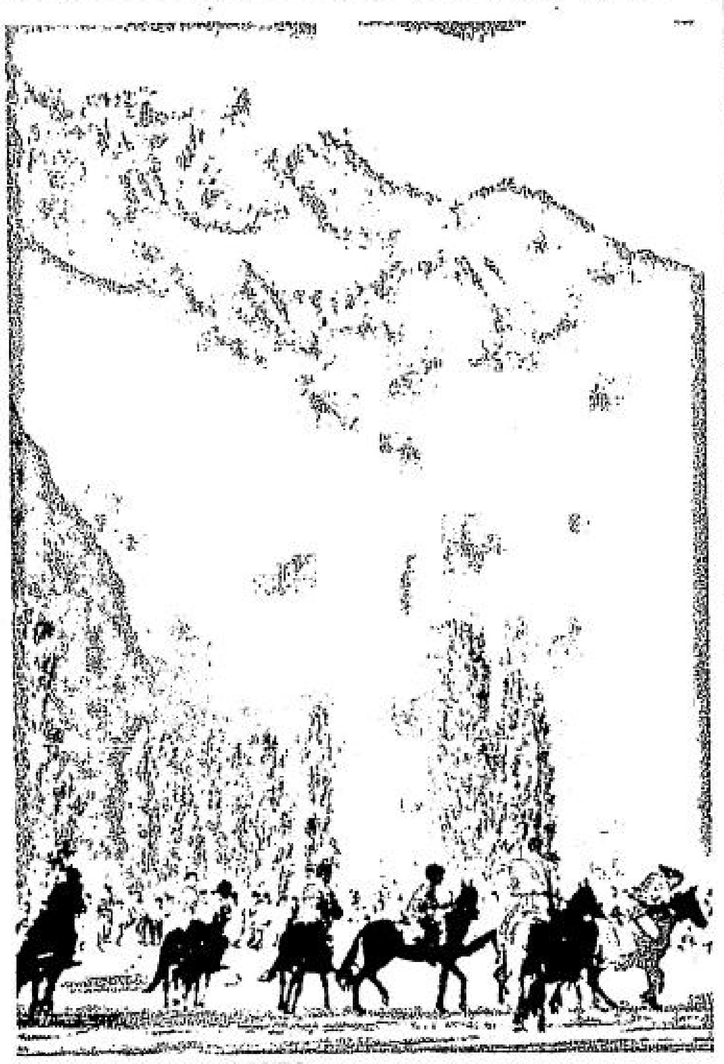
The White House's harsh response followed President George W. Bush's blunt dismissal last week of an Amnesty International report which described the US detention center in Guantanamo as a gulag and said the United States was responsible for an upsurge in human rights violations around the world. Bush called the allegations "absurd."

Last month, the White House blamed Newsweek magazine for damaging America's image in the Muslim world with a report that interrogators had flushed at least one copy of the Muslim holy book down a toilet to try to make detainees talk.

Former Guantanamo prisoners and lawyers for detainees have long accused US personnel at Guantanamo of putting the Koran into toilets.

With anti-American sentiment already strong in the Muslim world because of the US-led invasion of Iraq and prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad, the Newsweek report sparked violent protests in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Indonesia and Gaza.

Under pressure, Newsweek retracted the report. But McClellan said at the time that the magazine should "help repair the damage that has been done, particularly in the region," by explaining "what happened and why they got it wrong." *Reuters*



NO MORE TOURISTS AFP

Picture dated July 13, 2004 shows Pakistani tourists watching a polo game in the northern Pakistani area around Skardu, north of Islamabad. A newly released report says that three and a half years ago, the Sept. 11 terror attacks in 2001 and the subsequent US-led military assault which toppled Afghanistan's hardliner Taliban regime wiped Pakistan off the world tourist map.

Taiwan test fires its first cruise missile

TAIPEI—Taiwan has successfully test fired its first cruise missile, which would allow the island to hit major military targets in southeast China, a newspaper here reported Sunday.

The Hsiung Feng cruise missile, developed by the military-run Chungshan Institute of Science and Technology, has a range of 1,000 km and could be used to attack military bases in southeast China, the China Times said.

"Once deployed, it would mark the first time that Taiwan is able to put 'strategic weapons' into use. Its political and military impact would be far-reaching," the paper said.

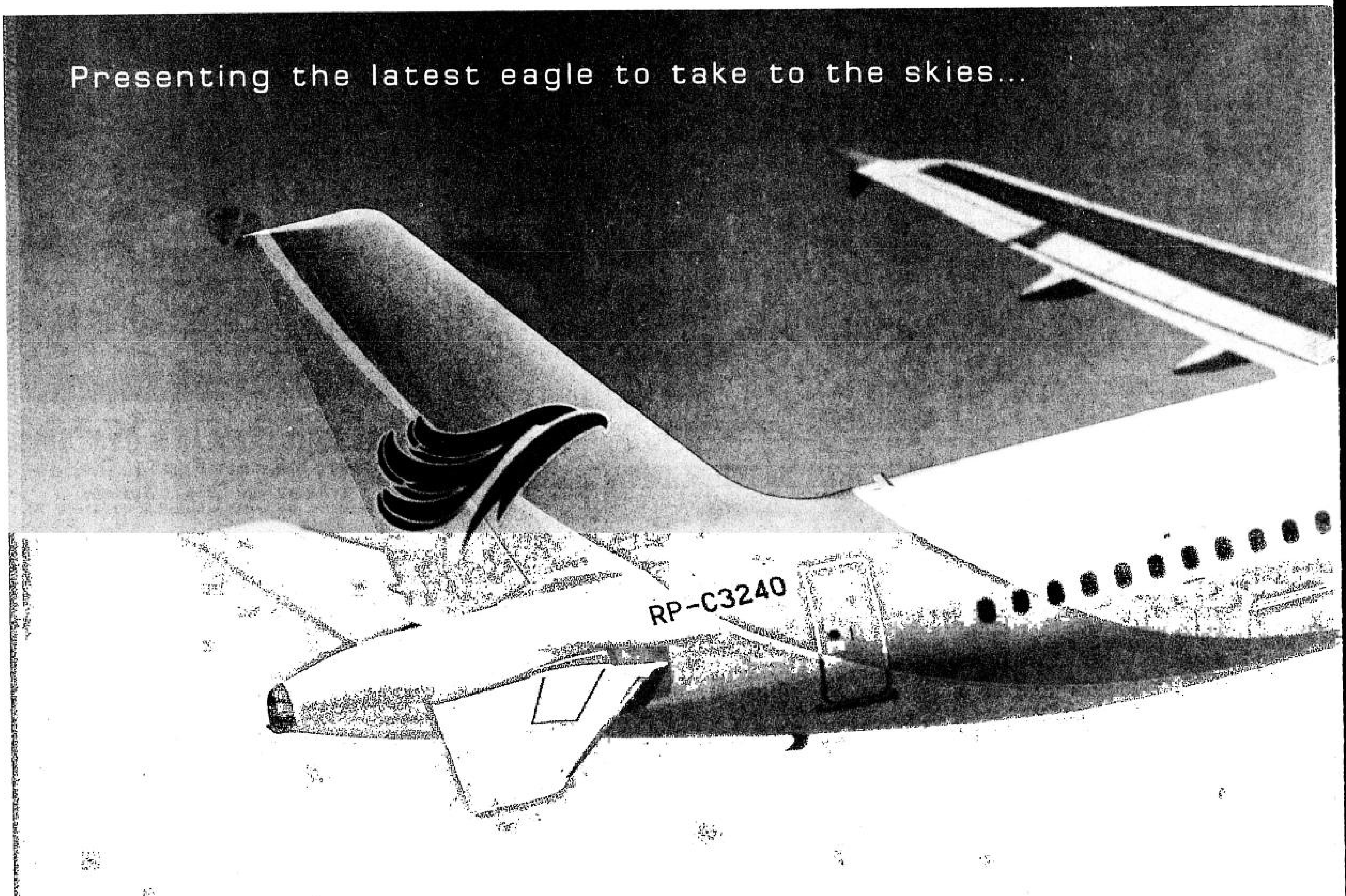
The defense ministry declined to comment on the report.

The newspaper said Defense Minister Lee Jye witnessed the test firing of the missile from Chiupeng military base in the southern Pingtung county. The missile flew over 500 km before hitting its target.

The report did not specify when the test took place but speculated that it could have been in March.

The missile is expected to go into pilot production later this year or next year.

Taiwan is striving to build up its missile defense capabilities to counter the military threat from China, which officials say has targeted the island with at least 700 ballistic missiles. *AFP*



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Schroeder, Chirac want EU Charter process to go on

BERLIN—German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and French President Jacques Chirac want other European Union countries to press on with ratifying the bloc's constitution, despite its rejection by French and Dutch voters.

The two leaders met in Berlin on Saturday to discuss their position ahead of an EU summit this month following the rejection of the constitution in separate referendums in France and Netherlands over the past week.

"The Chancellor and President Chirac were in agreement that the constitutional process must continue so that the views of each country are respected," German government spokesperson Bela Anda told reporters after the two leaders met for dinner.

The hastily arranged meeting between the two, who have both suffered stinging rebuffs from voters in recent weeks, underlined the uncertainty surrounding the constitution in the wake of the referendum defeats.

French voters who felt the charter imposed "ultra liberal" economic values and worried about losing jobs and Dutch voters wary about losing influence in an expanded bloc, have sparked a bout of soul-searching among European leaders over how to reconnect with an increasingly disillusioned public.

The issue is set to dominate an EU summit meeting in Brussels on June 16-17.

In Italy, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso urged the EU to "turn a crisis into an opportunity" and avoid a split over free market capitalism and the welfare state.

An important indication about further ratification could come on Monday, when the British government may signal whether it will delay a planned referendum on the constitution.

The constitution issue has come as EU leaders are searching for an agreement over the next mid-term budget for the bloc for the 2007-2013, which has been held up by the refusal of major contributors, including Germany, to increase their payments.

The problems over the two issues have raised big question marks over how the enlarged EU will be capable of functioning in coming years.

Anda reiterated comments from Schroeder that Germany was prepared to be flexible to reach a deal over the budget and said that other countries had to act as well.

"Germany is ready to move on the budget and that will be said at the summit," he said but gave no details. *Reuters*

TSUNAMI WEDDING REUTERS

Newly wed couples sit outside tents for persons displaced by the tsunami at a mass wedding at a camp in Gue Gajah village near the Indonesian city of Banda Aceh June 5. Twenty-three couples, displaced by the Dec. 26, 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, were wed at the camp on Sunday.

Spaniards assail talks with ETA

MADRID—Hundreds of thousands of people marched through Madrid on Saturday to protest against the government's conditional offer of talks with Basque separatist guerrilla group ETA.

Victims of ETA attacks and their relatives led protesters from all over Spain, carrying placards saying "No negotiation in my name" and "Murderers in prison."

They marched at the scenes of two of the bloodiest ETA car bombings—one that killed seven people in June 1993 and another that killed 12 in July 1986.

Organizers said a million took part but official estimates ranged from 250,000 to 850,000. *Reuters*

In Japan, saving energy is the patriotic thing to do

TOKYO—Surging oil prices and growing concerns about meeting targets to cut greenhouse gases produced by burning fossil fuels have revived efforts around the world to improve energy efficiency. But perhaps nowhere is the interest greater than here in Japan.

Even though Japan is already among the most frugal countries in the world, the government urged the Japanese to replace their older appliances and buy hybrid vehicles, all part of a patriotic effort to save energy and fight global warming. And big firms are jumping on the bandwagon, counting on the moves to increase sales of their latest models.

"It's like squeezing a dry towel" for the last few drips, said Katsumi Tomita of Matsushita, maker of the Panasonic brand. "The honest feeling of Japanese people is, 'How can we do more?'" *NYT*

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Willing and able

EDITORIAL

WHAT can be done to stop corruption? The results of a recent Social Weather Stations survey gives us one answer. These tell us that businessmen, fed up with continuing corruption, can in fact put up a good fight, and in the best way they know how. They can put money to work.

"The willingness of enterprises to fund a private sector anti-corruption program is now at a median 5 percent of net income," the SWS, culling the results of the fifth "Survey of Enterprises on Corruption," reported last week. That is to say, companies are now willing to set aside as much as 5 percent of their profit to fund anti-corruption initiatives. (In the first such survey conducted five years ago and limited to Metro Manila, what we can call the willingness index was a much more modest 1 percent of net income.)

How much loose change are we talking about here? One ready measure is the combined net income of the country's Top 5,000 companies, as compiled by the Securities and Exchange Commission. In 2003, that total topped P250 billion. "A median 5 percent of net income," therefore, amounts to more or less P12.5 billion.

That's over 18 times the entire P675-million budget of the Office of the Ombudsman.

But two-thirds of the SWS survey respondents were managers of small and medium-sized enterprises. Extrapolating the total amount that the business community is willing to contribute to an anti-corruption fund, therefore, cannot be as straightforward as calculating a percentage of the profits of the SEC 5000.

Whatever the measure is, however, we have no doubt that the total amount, if pooled together, would be considerable.

Let us, for the sake of argument, suppose that civic-minded businessmen from Metro Manila and several provinces agree to set aside a total of P1 billion to fund anti-corruption initiatives.

Is the agreement feasible? We think it is. Necessarily, the procedures for donating the money and using it must be reasonable and transparent; but the business community will not lack for able managers to determine what needs to be done.

Will the fund be useful? Absolutely. The Office of the Ombudsman pushed for a major increase in its budget for 2005, in large part to hire the many new lawyers it needs; after the hustle and bustle of legislative negotiations, it won an increase of P140 million. Following this lead, the business community can use its anti-corruption fund to pay for the services of some of the private sector's best lawyers, to help Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo and his prosecutors prepare solid anti-graft cases.

Can the fund be used to pay for tangible goods, instead of more ambiguous services? Yes, it can. The business community can use the pooled funds to buy equipment that the government's graft-busters need but do not have the budget for: high-end stuff such as surveillance equipment, or basic equipment such as data-crunching computers.

The business community may even decide to dedicate the uses of the fund to one high-profile sector or government agency, such as the Bureau of Customs, on a variation of the "broken windows" principle. Fix enough broken windows in a high-problem area, and the word will spread.

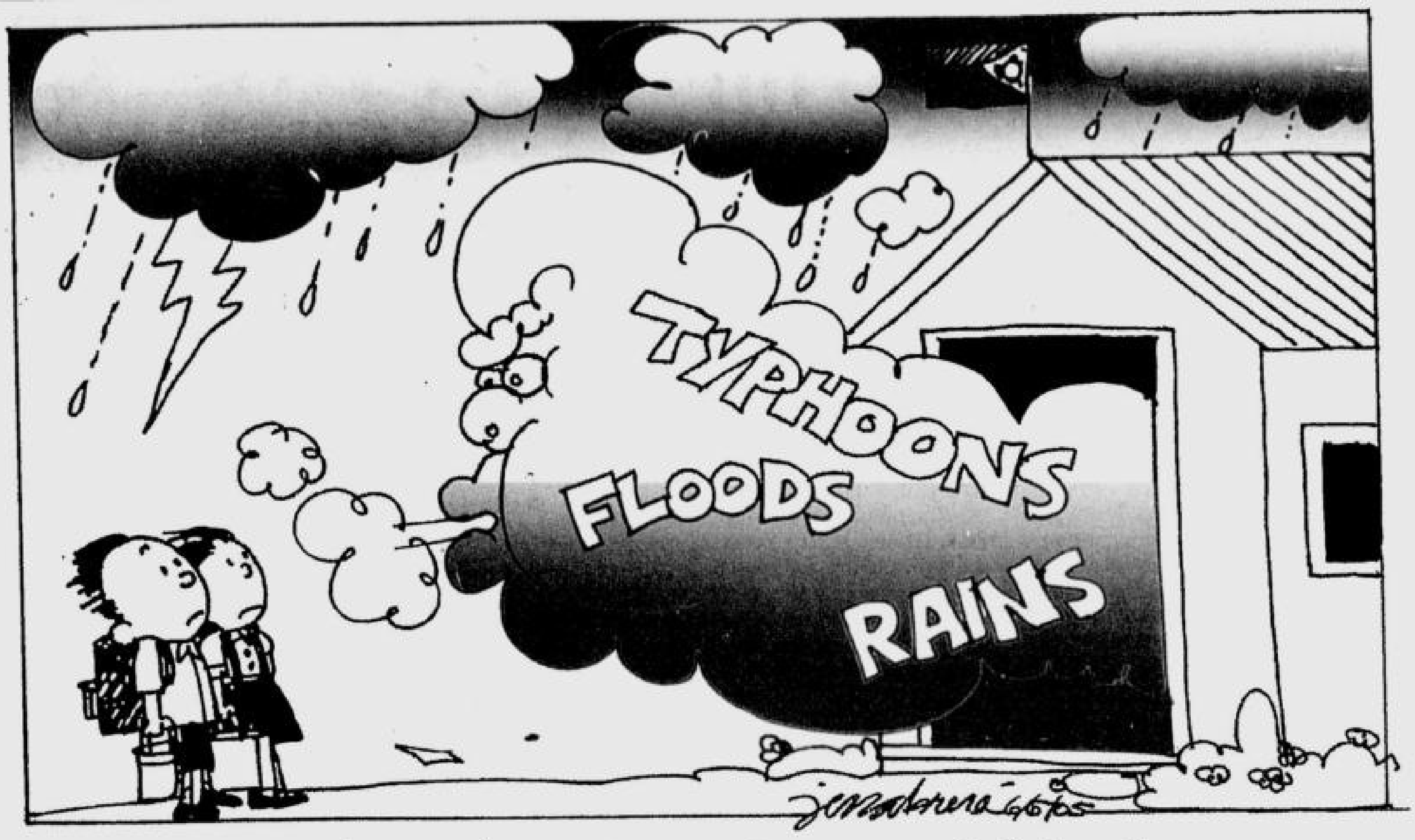
The latest enterprise survey shows that the willingness index has risen dramatically in the last five years. We can take this substantial increase in the amount of money the business community is willing to invest in anti-corruption drives as proof that more and more businessmen are now ready to put their hard-earned money where their mouth is.

That truly is good news, and everyone should encourage the business community to take the next step.

At the same time, everyone else must help protect the business community from its own worst failings: in this case, letting the money do all the talking. It isn't enough to simply throw money at the problem, and then be done with it.

Happily, the latest survey offers reassurance on this point. According to the SWS: "Large proportions of Filipino managers are willing not only to donate funds, but also to monitor government projects and to join Bids and Awards Committees of government agencies, personally and through senior staff, to be trained for anti-corruption work at their own expense."

Money, plus time and talent. Now this is an investment the country truly needs; it is one which the INQUIRER fully supports.



Is the administration panicking?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

WHAT'S with the Arroyo administration? Does it want to stamp out *jueteng* or not? If it does, why is the whole government machinery scaring witnesses and discrediting the first witness after only one day of testimony?

No less than the justice secretary is threatening to prosecute potential witnesses against jueteng operators and their protectors, instead of inviting them to come out and testify. The National Bureau of Investigation, instead of looking for witnesses against the jueteng operators, has quickly found two witnesses against the whistle-blower, Wilfredo "Boy" Mayor. Alleged bagmen of presidential son Mikey Arroyo immediately filed libel charges against Mayor, which the Department of Justice, not the fiscal's office, accepted just as quickly, despite the fact that his testimony before the Senate is absolutely privileged and therefore not libelous. If Mayor was lying, he should be charged with perjury, not libel. Besides, he is a government witness, protected by the Witness Protection Program, with a guarantee of immunity from suit from the Senate itself.

And the big guns of Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi), the President's political party, held a press conference to say all sorts of bad things against Mayor. The big guns included presidential brother-in-law Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo, alias Jose Pidal, who is not from Bicol but from Negros and therefore would not know anything about Mayor who operated in Bicol. By their actions, you can deduce what's in their hearts and minds. I sense panic in the administration camp—and after only one day of hearing. What could be the reason?

Well, the smoking gun is getting dangerously close to the President. Son Mikey has been accused by Mayor of getting payola from him. The same accusation has been leveled by others at the presidential husband. If there is no truth to the accusation, the innocent can always shrug it off and dare the accusers to prove it. But why is the administration panicking, immediately unleashing heavy artillery against the accusers? Could it be that the accusers can prove it? There are at least 12 more witnesses to follow.

Could it be that after hearing Mayor, the administration has deduced that more damaging testimony would surely come out, and so it decided to nip the hearing in the bud by scaring off the other witnesses?

If I were the justice secretary—or the President—I would like to hear more witnesses so I will find out the truth and solve this jueteng problem once and for all. After all, if they lie, expert cross-examination will expose them. File the perjury and other cases against all the liars later, but I will first listen to what they have to say.

But if I know that some very damaging testimony will come out and that some people close to me are probably guilty, I would try to block, abort, derail and mislead any investigation. So what do you think is the reason?

* * *

In the United States, they are hailing as a hero "Deep Throat" (now revealed as former FBI deputy director W. Mark Felt), the whistle-blower whose information, given to the Washington Post reporters, led to the resignation of US President Richard Nixon. In the Philippines, the whistle-blowers (Gov. Chavit Singson and Clarissa Ocampo) who exposed the jueteng payola given to President Estrada and the Jose Velarde bank account, were also hailed as heroes. But whistle-blower Mayor, who is trying to do the same thing, is being destroyed by the government itself. What could be the reason? Wouldn't the government benefit from what he and other witnesses would reveal?

Perhaps, the Arroyo administration learned from that other president in America who tried to cover-up the Watergate scandal because he was involved in it. He did everything in his power as president—bribed people, used powerful government officials and powerful agencies to thwart the investigation, and hired armies of well-paid lawyers—but still failed to cover up the Watergate mess. Nixon and all the President's men still ended up without jobs.

No wonder President Arroyo's men are panicking.

* * *

The President's popularity rating has plunged to its lowest ever. If she were to run for any public office now, Amay Bisaya would defeat her. Ironically, that is what she has been trying to do—be more popular to the people—all this time. That is why, almost every day, she goes everywhere to shake hands with people, inaugurate projects, cut ribbons and deliver speeches as though she is still campaigning for election.

But the more she does that, the more unpopular she becomes. Because that is not what a President is supposed to do. The President is supposed to stay in her office to run the government efficiently and solve the thousand and one problems that crop up daily.

What she achieves by her frequent trips is waste her time and plenty of the people's money. She needs an army of *alalays*, security personnel and other officials when she goes around, thus using up scarce money. All for what? She gets her mug in the media and gives the impression that she is working, but that's all fluff. She does not achieve anything really important, like putting more food in the people's stomachs and giving them jobs.

That is why she is becoming more unpopular in spite of all the handshaking and waving and picture-taking. After she leaves, their lives are not any wee bit better. Funds that could be used better to serve the people are wasted.

Ms President, stop all the tramping-around and money-spending and start working, and you will begin to become more popular.

Business as usual

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THE BUSINESS community is astir. According to the SWS, nearly all the businessmen in this country—99 percent of respondents—think graft riots in government. Most of them (66 percent) think there is "a lot of corruption in the public sector," while some (28 percent) think there is only "some corruption." The corruption, they estimate, is jacking up the cost of doing business in this country by 15 percent.

To combat this, they are willing to put 5 percent of their net profits into an anti-corruption campaign. "The private sector's indignation and willingness to participate, both financially and personally, in fighting corruption has been growing rapidly," said Mahar Mangahas, head of the SWS.

That is all very nice, except for one thing. It presumes the business community to be part of the cure when it is in fact part of the disease.

That the business community should bestir itself to do something about a plague that's been ravaging the country for years only when the plague has rudely crossed its household speaks of the narrow perspective that has allowed the plague to become a plague in the first place. Contributing 5 percent of profits to fighting corruption will be about as effective in stopping it as putting up high walls, topped with barbed wire and glass shards, in stopping robbery and murder in this country.

You want to stop corruption, you stop it where and when it happens, not when it starts affecting you. I did not hear the business community complain at all about the epic corruption that took place in last year's elections. On the contrary, I heard only vast silence, interrupted by bursts of approval. More than any other sector of the society, the business community took the position that GMA was the "lesser evil" compared to Fernando Poe Jr., and in that light condoned the massive lying, spending, and cheating wreaked by Malacañang.

I did not hear the business community complain that GMA was bankrupting the nation by siphoning public money with a vacuum cleaner to put up huge billboards across the length and breadth of the country—and hiring a horde of sweepers to sweep the walls clean of posters of her rivals. I did not hear the business community complain that PCSO and Pagcor were funding her campaign with ads that beamed on TV and radio with deadening repetition. I did not hear the business community say the money used for the ads was taxpayers' money, the citizens' money, our money, which unauthorized use constituted theft.

More than this, I did not hear the business community complain about an even worse corruption that took place there, which was the perversion of the electoral process itself. More than the corruption of the body, this administration is guilty of the corruption of the soul. Which is the one thing that fuels today's humongous pillage, like gasoline fire, the removal of all ethical restraint. I did not hear the business community rail bitterly at the fact that the very people who derailed the computerization of canvassing by awarding the winning bid to a patently unqualified bidder were rewarded with more powers to do as they pleased with the Stone Age ballot boxes. I did not hear the business community spew invectives at the railroading of the count. In fact, for the first time in its life, Namfrel found itself in league with the Comelec, Jose Concepcion and Bill Luz agreeing with it that the elections were clean, notwithstanding that GMA won more against FPJ in Cebu (8-1) than in Pampanga (5-1).

I did not hear the business community affirm categorically it did not matter who won the elections so long as the integrity of the process was kept intact. I heard it say only that FPJ was bad for business. I kept saying then that we do not protest the breathtaking lying, cheating and stealing being done before our eyes, we may as well abandon any hope of stopping corruption. If we can tolerate the corruption of the most sacred of democracy's institutions, which is the vote, we can tolerate the corruption of anything at all.

Indeed, today I do not hear the business community expressing disgust that the justice secretary has been spending his waking hours defending his boss rather than his muse, Lady Macbeth rather than Lady Justice. He it is who has been trying to intimidate the witnesses brought out by Archbishop Oscar Cruz by threatening them with libel suits instead of looking into the merits of their testimony. I do not hear the business community complaining loudly that the NBI chief, Reynaldo Wycoco, is spending his waking hours as well trying to produce witnesses who would controvert Archbishop Cruz's witnesses' testimonies rather than investigating their veracity as he is sworn to do. But, well, wasn't Wycoco the same fellow who spent his waking hours trying to prove Acsa Ramirez guilty after his boss made the mistake of making that claim in public and humiliating Ramirez in the process?

The businessmen want to make amends and help push back corruption in the country—no of the country—they would do better to just give the 5 percent of their net profits to where it would most do good—to Archbishop Cruz He it is who, like Bernardo Carpio, is trying to keep the clashing rocks from turning the country into a pancake. Corruption is all of a piece it cannot be solved by attacking only the part of it that has to do with jacking up the cost of doing business in this country. It can only be solved by attacking the entirety of it, which has to do with jacking up the cost of staying alive in this country. The businessmen may not cure the afflictions of business without curing the afflictions of the citizens first.

The problem with "business as usual" is that it always leads to more unusual torments for everyone.

Scandals elbow out good news

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

AT OUR dzRH program last night, we queried PNP chief Arturo Lomibao if he was for legalizing *jueteng*, as some legislators and sectors are advocating. In his answer, he sought to differentiate between the "institutional stand" of the PNP, which is, to combat jueteng as it is an illegal activity, and his "personal stand." Lomibao stressed that in his predecessors' time, an officer is removed after "three strikes," i.e., three raids in a PNP officer's area of responsibility, which indicate unabated jueteng. But he said that after he assumed office, he raised it to only "one strike," so that now an officer is out after one raid.

He was not categorical, however, about his personal stand, and instead referred us to the study made by former PNP officer, now Manila Times correspondent, Wally Sombrero Jr., which showed that with 115,000 PNP personnel for the 82 or 84 million Filipinos, the ratio is about 2,500 people per cop, against the ideal of about 500 people per cop. Sombrero also pointed out that the PNP is sorely lacking in logistics and equipment. Lomibao stressed that of the total 1,530 police stations across the country, only 33 percent have ground vehicles. Meanwhile, the PNP needs 90,000 radios.

* * *

Lomibao's aim is to create "stronger police stations" and transform the PNP into a "more capable, more effective and more credible force." Citizens cannot quarrel with this, and it's clear that the PNP has to be supported with more funds (only P5 billion is available for its operations) in order to upgrade its fighting capability, not just against jueteng but all forms of vices and crimes as well. Members of Congress are quick to condemn the police for its inability to curb jueteng, but it would be a good idea if they could give the PNP a fighting chance through the logistics it needs, before they assign blame. As Lomibao noted to us, this is a wake-up call for everyone to join hands in fighting jueteng, not the least of whom are the local officials.

Archbishop Oscar Cruz promises to bring more witnesses to this morning's Senate hearing. But at this point, one wonders how useful they will be, since the picture has become very muddled. Cruz says one witness may produce a ledger of the recipients of payola, but how credible would it be? Expect more denials and counter-denials. Apart from the allegations raised by Rep. Luis Villafuerte about some unsavory activities of confessed jueteng "operator" Wilfredo Mayor, Albay leader Ito Los Baños has testified in writing that Mayor was working for Panfilo Lacson's candidacy in the last May elections and had even solicited donations from Los Baños himself. This injects outright a political angle into the Senate hearings.

* * *

At this juncture, perhaps the point raised by Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, President Macapagal-Arroyo's economic adviser, ought to be given serious thought. He stressed that instead of four government offices carrying out separate investigations into jueteng, an independent "truth commission" could be formed to do this and then file charges in court against those implicated in the vice. Salceda may be accused of trying to sweep under the rug Mayor's accusation against him, but it really makes sense to centralize all investigations. The question is, who will appoint the members of this truth commission? A lot would also depend on the commission's perceived independence.

* * *

What is lamentable is that, as in past sensational exposés, the jueteng probes have elbowed out of media other issues that ought to merit even more space. For instance, another paper pointed out that Jaime Zobel de Ayala, president and CEO of Ayala Corp., had to go to Singapore recently to get a good forum for his report on the state of health of the Philippine economy. Zobel stressed that it was doing quite well in many aspects, even though serious problems, notably the fiscal deficit, persist. Among the bright spots he noted: RP's GDP has been growing for the sixth straight year since the 1997 Asian financial crisis, hitting a 6-percent growth rate last year, one of the highest in 15 years. Exports have been growing consistently over the past four years, with a 9.3-percent growth last year, while foreign direct investments last year grew 409 percent vs. local investments' growth of 76 percent. Zobel also pointed out that existing foreign investments here are aggressively expanding their operations and capacities, prodded by the downtrend in interest rates. Corporate earnings across all sectors are recovering steadily, surpassing pre-1997 levels, and there are mergers and consolidations in crucial industries. Tourists are coming back to pre-1997 levels.

But whoever gets to hear about such good news here? As the Singapore Straits Times noted, good news in RP "is not as exciting as corruption."

* * *

Yesterday's gospel was about how the tax collector Matthew was called by Christ to "follow me" and he did. As priests noted yesterday, at that time, tax collectors were among the most hated as well as the most corrupt. Thus, it was a fantastic personal transformation that Matthew went on to become one of the four evangelists in the New Testament as well as one of Christ's 12 apostles! I got to appreciate this biblical insight even more when I read in yesterday's papers that President Macapagal-Arroyo, in a recent interview with two foreign wire services, stressed that "We've had the highest (tax) collection and the highest increase in history, and we've also had a budget surplus for the month for the first time in many years." She also said that Customs chief Alberto Lina also reported unprecedented tax collections. Thus, from GMA's assertion, one can see that the tax collectors in our midst may no longer be among the most derided citizens.

The south has no Archbishop Cruz

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Antonio J. Montalvan II

THERE is something hegemonic in the omission.

Notice that the nation's authorities—both civil and political—hardly mention, if at all, the Visayas or Mindanao in the unfolding farce disguised as war against the illegal numbers game of *jueteng*. The dismal treatment of the south by the government is glaringly reflected in the absence of any statement about what the nation's authorities intend to do about illegal gambling, which continues unabated in many provinces in Mindanao. Oh, by the way, Mindanao is still part of the Republic of the Philippines. And by the way, too, jueteng is alien to the people of the south. *Masiao*, which is—according to a national television hostess—the Visayas-Mindanao version of jueteng, is no longer so, for her information. What she said was true eons ago. Over here, or down here, to put it more correctly in the Manila-centric perspective, the illegal numbers game has since metamorphosed and now goes by the name "Last Two."

Why Last Two? The winning combination of this form of illegal gambling is the last two digits of the winning numbers in Pagcor's lotto. Unless there is no hanky-panky, the winning combination is thus unpredictable, something that not even Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz can predict as he did with the winning numbers of jueteng in Bicol. But that is no reason why until now, despite the proliferation of Last Two in Mindanao, the region's 21 Catholic bishops cannot replicate this form of important moral crusade in the island's 21 dioceses and prelatures. Why the lack of gravitas, Your Excellencies?

Mindanao does not have a dearth of church leaders with the fearlessness of Archbishop Cruz. The only difference is that in Mindanao, a Catholic bishop has to grapple with political warlords whose arsenals may be anything but puny. Political warlordism in Mindanao is, in a sense, a creation of Manila's continuing neglect of the island. The focus on Manila and Luzon is like almost looking the other way when politicians in Mindanao misbehave. And when it comes to misbehavior, the police are probably not far behind. Little wonder that a social monster such as the Kuratong Baleleng was born in Mindanao and for a time controlled the lucrative shabu trade in Northern Mindanao. Little wonder that for a time, during Sen. Panfilo Lacson's days, the Kuratong Baleleng was perceived as operating in cahoots with the police. Which many people believed anyway no matter how many times Lacson runs for the highest office of the land.

Warlords or not, the fact remains that Last Two is, at this very moment, alive and well and raking in millions in the south. I should know. A personal acquaintance of mine told me the inside story. He is a Last Two operative. The collections are done literally with speed, with the latest fashionable motorbikes provided by the gambling financier. His Last Two "business" is run by a relative with the same surname as the city mayor's. And his is only one among many other Last Two operations in other turfs of the city.

But that is only the tip of the iceberg. The same mayor had been alleged as a protector of *masiao* in the heydays of this illegal numbers game in Mindanao, releasing bet collectors apprehended during police raids. Again, why do I know this? Because a family member of the gambling lord told me so.

And what does Manila do? Nothing. And the local police? In their fear of the politician, nothing, of course.

I just learned that there is in fact a law, whose Republic Act number—with the endless list of unimplemented laws we have—escapes me right now, but which in fact empowers the Department of Interior and Local Government to dismiss an elected government official who does not do anything about the illegal numbers game in her or his territory. Well, why don't you try this in Mindanao, Secretary Angelo Reyes? No, because it will probably result in the dismissal of all mayors in Mindanao from office? No, because it will leave Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo without her army of local supporters?

Local churches in Mindanao have been vocal in the past against the entry of gambling casinos. Well, today things are different. Rallying against casinos is comparably a small feat; but against Last Two, it is not. The war against Last Two would be a war against mayors and governors who benefit from the illegal numbers game. When the spigot runs dry, we know they're going to raise hell.

Well, it would be worse when the social structures allow the vultures of society to bleed the poor dry and keep them in a state of suspended fantasia.

Still, all it would take to mount a war against Last Two in Mindanao would be a clone of Archbishop Cruz.

* * *

Comments to monta@cu-cdo.edu.ph

'Jueteng' since time immemorial

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

TONIGHT on ABS-CBN's "The Correspondents," you'll see me interviewed about *jueteng*. Doing some research in preparation for that interview, I came across a transcript of a press conference held by President Quezon on July 10, 1936, eight months into his first term. The issue was apparently a jueteng scandal in Laguna province. What's interesting is the approach to the issue: a distinction between being morally convinced of someone's guilt, and proving that guilt legally, and the political considerations involved. I only have one volume of the confidential transcript (the portion below was given "off the record"), so I do not know if the governor involved was suspended or not.

Here's the relevant portion from the July 10, 1936 press conference transcript:

"THE PRESS: Are you informed of the jueteng situation in Laguna?

"THE PRESIDENT: We are taking a hand in that. The Secretary of the Interior has a man there who is investigating that situation. I am prepared to give you some information about it, but this is not for publication. I am morally convinced that the wife of Governor Cailles has been running that jueteng and I am also convinced that the poor governor did not want her to do it. But while Cailles is one of the greatest heroes during the revolutionary period, brave as he is, he is afraid of his wife. The only question we are trying to determine is whether it is true that Mrs. Cailles has stopped her jueteng since I sent word to the Governor that unless that wife of his stopped that jueteng, I was going to remove him from office. I am a very good friend of Cailles. I admire him. He is one of the best governors the Philippines ever had. That is proven by the fact that Cailles is the only man in the Philippine Islands that has been re-elected four or five times as governor. He had a strong opposition, but when he ran for governor, he was elected and elected by the common people because the rich and the political leaders in Laguna have always been against Cailles. My party has always had a very strong influence in Laguna. They never succeeded in electing a man for representative who did not have the support of my party. We always elected our man. Whenever Cailles was a candidate, he came out with the support of the poor people. And thinking so highly of him, I sent word to him that I was going after his jueteng. I gave him about one month. After a month elapsed, I sent one of his most intimate friends to tell him that unless he could stop his wife, I would remove him without much investigation. The report that I have received is that his wife has really stopped, and the fellow who told me that is convinced and that he is willing to spend money to get a lawyer for Cailles. Weinzheimer is a pretty honest gentleman. He believes in autocracy and he likes Cailles because he seems to be autocratic, but at the same time he does not like this jueteng. I sent him to tell Cailles, to stop his wife and he did. He said: 'Mr. President, I am convinced that the wife of Cailles has stopped, and therefore I am going to defend him. Do not mix up in this case. I am going to find that out.' I sent for the Constabulary officer in Laguna—he is one of the best officers that we have. He told me he is convinced that the wife of Cailles has stopped. Of course, my political associates in Laguna, who were against Cailles, told me that the Constabulary officer is a false witness because his wife is the friend of the wife of the governor. But I do not believe that because I am really inclined to believe that the Governor's wife stopped at the time I sent word. But still I am having the investigation conducted, and I should like to have the chance to suspend Cailles because if I suspend Cailles, this is going to put the fear of God into the heart of every provincial governor of the Philippines. The minute I suspend Cailles, every provincial governor of the Philippine Islands will see that the laws of this country are enforced. But I cannot suspend him until I have more prima facie evidence that his wife is running jueteng.

"Weinzheimer told me that he is afraid of the wife of Cailles. She is really the most aggressive wife. It is pitiful to see that a brave soldier, who is never afraid of anybody, is afraid of his wife, (Laughter) and I am having that properly investigated. We shall never be able to stop jueteng until the people are convinced that the wife of Cailles has stopped."

One thing about jueteng and politics is that the element of snobbishness, if you will, about taking money from rackets has vanished. The reporter, off camera, asked me to explain what I meant, and I explained it by pointing out how a President, like Ferdinand Marcos, would have found it beneath him to take jueteng money. Joseph Estrada, accused of taking jueteng money, belongs to a generation of politicians who dropped the pretenses of their predecessors. In the past, whatever their actual involvement with stealing public funds, politicians simply thought it beneath them to get involved in certain things: poker or roulette for high stakes might be all right, even fashionable; taking jueteng money or cockfighting was not dignified. These distinctions no longer hold sway, and reflect, in a way, the manner in which the payola from illegal gambling became "systematized" under martial law.

If Ferdinand Marcos thought it beneath him to take jueteng money, it was not beneath him—indeed, essential to his hold on power—to have a say in how his underlings derived their illegal incomes. So, for example, the Palace might not take jueteng funds but it would impose general rules on who did what. Politicians on the take during the martial law years, such as Chavit Singson, would have become adept at figuring out how this worked. Today, the system has become entrenched and everyone, it seems, is on the take.

* * *

Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph/blog

'Wakarimasen'

COMMENTARY

Junefe Gilig Payot
Institute on Church and Social Issues

SEARCHING for a pleasant distraction from our often emotionally and mentally taxing research on urban poverty and housing, I decided to teach a course on basic Nihongo (Japanese language) to university students during the summer semester.

So I became a "Sir" in April. (All throughout, it sent chills down my spine whenever a student called me that. It evoked images of the Knights of the Round Table or of Sir Elton John, depending on my mood. "Sensei" would have made more sense, but even that title made me feel uncomfortable and unworthy.)

It was a fun experience although I was not sure if my students liked me. When they learned how to ask questions in Nihongo, they started to ask me questions like "*Anata wa inu desu ka* (Are you a dog)?" I was tempted to give the most vicious replies like, "Yes, and I want to bite your head off! Grrrr!" But a "Sir" was not supposed to do that. So I decided to attribute such questions to their limited vocabulary and instead replied each time with a hint of smile, "*Wakarimasen* (I don't understand)." Sometimes I'd say, "*Mada shirimasen* (I don't know yet)." And they would all laugh.

Many in my class were economics students, some were legal management students, one was a student of chemistry with computer engineering. (The names of the courses nowadays are becoming longer and longer, but I doubt if the students are learning more.) I wonder what they will become in the future. Will they stay in the country? What kind of work will they get into? How are they going to help the country?

Although teaching the Japanese language was fun, I often found myself wishing I was teaching a course that would allow me to impress upon the students the dire straits that the country has been in and to inspire them to do something about it. (So much for my search for a "pleasant distraction.")

I wished there was a way of integrating social issues into my Japanese language class by teaching them words like *hinkon* (poverty) and *juutaku busoku* (housing shortage). After all, Japan is the Philippines' biggest source of ODA, much of which supposedly goes into our anti-poverty programs. But that would have made my class such a downer. So instead, I taught them such words as *hana* (flower), *chou* (butterfly), *kirei* (pretty) and, of course, *inu*, for dog. I wished I could teach them how to say: "The country is going to the dogs."

We all know that these social problems are always depressing—is this why slums are called depressed areas?—especially when they strike us personally. In fact, I think we have been suffering from national depression for a long time now, which is why it's difficult to muster enough collective energy to take to the streets again. Still, these issues have to be tackled in our universities, for real education is about opening people's eyes to social realities and inspiring them to act.

Quoting from Paulo Freire, the Brazilian thinker who wrote the trailblazing "Pedagogy of the Oppressed," Fr. Joel Tabora, S.J., president of the Ateneo de Naga University, told me once that the Ateneo universities, "must ask themselves whether the education they provide is at the service of the status quo—whether it's for preservation rather than transformation of the status quo."

He lamented that "many of the students who go to our universities go there to get a job in the very social structure which the Jesuit social apostolate is professing to change." He said that there has to be more dovetailing and collaboration between the social apostolate and the educational/academic apostolate to effect change.

Father Tabora also asked, "Who is determining whose agenda? Is the social agenda determining the educational agenda like it should? The universities have many resources at their disposal to contribute to social change but what are they doing?"

Although he was talking specifically about the Ateneo universities, the issues Father Tabora raised apply to all the universities in the country, private or public. Each university or college must ask itself these questions (especially before thinking about increasing tuition fees). An educational institution without a social agenda has no right to exist.

There are different ways of making sure that the academic agenda of a university or a college and its social agenda fit each other. Each will have to tailor its strategies according to the context of its location and its strengths and weakness. The important thing is that there must be a conscious effort to make education responsive to the needs of the nation.

Indeed, in spite of the temptation to make political shortcuts (again!) in a bid to get the country out of its worsening situation, I still believe that the surest way out is through the formation of a truly educated population that has the welfare of the nation, especially the poor, at its heart. It might not be as fast as an impeachment move, but it will do us better in the long-term.

On a recent visit to my elementary school in Cagayan de Oro, I saw written on one of the walls there the phrase, "*Bayan Muna, Bago Sarili.*" Nice suggestion, but how many have really internalized this motto? Is our education helping instill this in us?

It is often said by the nostalgic among us that we used to be second only to Japan in economic wealth. But what is often not said is that one of the important factors that ensured Japan's recovery after the war and its continued prosperity today was an education that nurtured a sense of national identity and national socio-economic agenda in each Japanese individual.

The Filipinos, like the Japanese, are known to put much importance on education. But why are we not taking seriously the connection between a socially responsive education and a truly strong republic?

Wakarimasen.

THEY SAID

Unknowing

"If members of Congress or if the President can see the film, there is no need for debate. They will know what needs to be done! Problem is, they don't know what is happening."

—Ditsi Carolino who won the Best Director Award in the One World '05 Human Rights Documentary Film Festival, which was held in Prague, Czech Republic, for her movie "Bunso."

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Same problems haunting RP educational system

WITH THE ADVENT of School Year 2005-2006 and with some 18 million students going to around 42,000 public schools, the educational system will face once again the same problems that have been haunting it for years.

Because of the wrong priorities of the government, the school system will be saddled anew with insufficient classrooms, lack of books and instructional support materials, inadequate chairs and tables and shortage of teachers.

The government doesn't have to look far. The problems are evident in schools in the second congressional district of Quezon City such as Batasan Hills Elementary School, Commonwealth Elementary School, Lupang Pangako Elementary School and Payatas Elementary School.

These schools are near the House of Representatives, where—what an irony!—appropriation bills are formulated.

We know that the House Committee on Basic Education and Culture, for one, has been trying its best to address the problems pertaining to education. But it is apparent that the government prefers to give more attention to image-building, military and police intelligence activities (which, sadly, lack intelligence) and the payment of foreign debts incurred during the reign of the conjugal dictatorship.

Even more revolting, 25 percent of the national budget goes to graft and corruption. This is according to the study made by the UP College of Public Administration. The study was later confirmed by the World Bank.

The Constitution provides that "(T)he State shall assign the highest budgetary priority to education and ensure that teaching will attract and retain the rightful share of the best available talents through adequate remuneration and other means of job satisfaction and fulfillment." But it is deplorable to note that the government fails miserably in providing adequate funding for education.

So, with inadequate resources, plus the fact that graft and corruption eats up the already limited budget for our teachers and schools, we can't expect to upgrade the quality of education in this country.

Quo vadis, Philippine educational system?

—EUSEBIO S. SAN DIEGO,
president,
Quezon City Public School Teachers Association,
22 Antonia St., Centerville,
Pasong Tamo, Tandang Sora, QC

Purging the tax law of 'poison pill'

OPPOSITION Sen. Alfredo S. Lim truly deserves the commendation of our people after he unconditionally gave up his pork barrel for 2005 (in response to our people's clamor) and after he single-handedly moved for the repeal or amendment of the so-called "poison pill" provision of the Tax Code, more particularly, the "7th sub-paragraph of Subsection C, (4) of Section 145, of Republic Act 8424, otherwise known as the Tax Reform Act of 1997."

According to former Socio Economic Planning Secretary Solita Monsod and other respected economists and financial experts, our government is expected to receive several billions of pesos in additional revenues with the approval of Lim's amendment. Former finance secretary Joselito Camacho has opined, "We lost about P28 billion in potential tax collection from Fortune, La Suerte and Sterling, Mighty, etc."

As proposed by Lim, in eight years' time, we could have easily collected P320 billion. Hopefully, the Philippine Senate will rise to the occasion by adhering to the beneficial proposal of the senator from Manila.

May we have more legislators with the caliber of Senator Lim.

—ARTURO M. TOPACIO JR.,
UE Law Alumni Association,
Hall of Fame Awardee,
Manila and Cavite City

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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

No end to corruption

THIS is in reaction to Isagani Cruz's column titled "The second most corrupt." (PDI, 5/21/05) Although I have been living in the United States since 1976, I keep myself updated on developments in the Philippines. Every day, I read the online edition of the INQUIRER, particularly its editorial section.

It's really sad that we are now considered the second most corrupt country in the world. What's even worse is that there is no end in sight to this problem of corruption in the government. Although we read in the papers that many government officials are being indicted, we only see very few convictions, if any. Conviction is the exception rather than the rule.

Unabated corruption will soon bankrupt the country. The economy will further weaken resulting in the high cost, not just of basic commodities but also of practically everything. The government's response—raising taxes—is misguided at best. I can only sympathize with the average Filipino who can barely eke out a living.

I don't know how we can solve corruption in the Philippines because it is now a way of life. I can only hope that someday—and I hope soon—my fellow Pinoys will realize that corruption must stop and must be stopped. Otherwise, we will all suffer as fools.

—BILL SABALBURO,
cacio123@yahoo.com

A pillar of Philippine journalism

TEODORO Benigno Jr. is dead and a part of me died, too. His journalistic career, which spanned over half a century, made him one of the pillars of Philippine journalism. He stood out among his peers with his eloquent prose and excellent education, tempered by vast experience and intelligence. His stinging attacks on the subjects of his criticism were like a burning Japanese knife cutting through butter.

It may be mean to say that those he regularly criticized in his writings may be secretly rejoicing. But I hope that Benigno's death would leave an army of critical but fair, objective, principled and incorruptible columnists whose master is none other than truth and justice so that those he criticized will not have a sound sleep.

There are a few columnists I read whose style resembles that of Benigno and who are as brave and fearless, and I hope that they would continue to fiscalize the wrong and favor the right. In life, Teddyman elevated standards and, in his death, the quality of his writings will surely be missed.

—RAMON MAYUGA,
Heckstr. 24,
45239 Essen, Germany

No mention of Postinor

LET me thank the INQUIRER for publishing the letter, "The beginning of life" (PDI, 4/29/05) that I submitted.

This time I am writing to request clarification to a statement alluded to the Philippine Obstetrical and Gynecological Society (POGS) in the May 13 column of Rina Jimenez-David.

The statement read: "In another instance of scientific perfidy, POGS, the organization of obstetricians and gynecologists, submitted a letter that said in part: 'If indeed preventing implantation of a fertilized ovum constitutes abortion, then Postinor causes abortion.'"

If I remember right, the letter from which the statement was lifted could be the one that I wrote to POGS president Dr. Evelyn Palaypayon regarding contraception. However, Postinor was never mentioned in the letter or in any other letter, albeit it is true that any procedure or process that prevents implantation of a fertilized ovum in the endometrial cavity is tantamount to abortion.

May I request clarification of the circumstance by which the misquotation was committed to rectify, if ever, any erroneous conclusions that might have been entertained by the reading public of the No. 1 newspaper because of that statement.

—SANTIAGO A. DEL ROSARIO, M.D.
obstetrician-gynecologist,
Suite 210 Makati Medical Center,
Makati City

Best way to earn world's confidence

IN A SPEECH soon after the bicameral conference committee passed the new VAT bill with the provision that the President may raise the tax rate to 12 percent in January 2006, President Macapagal-Arroyo declared, with accustomed braggadocio, that she indeed intends to do just that. It was her way of reassuring international money lenders that she has the political will to bludgeon the taxpaying public to yielding more revenues to pay for our present debts and the additional loans that she intends to get during her term.

We will see soon enough if the international money lenders will be falling over each other offering her more loans, and if investors will be scurrying into the country with their money bags. One thing though is sure: the rising crescendo of protest will accompany the soaring cost of living.

There is a better way of reassuring the international community of the viability of the government: GMA should show the world that she is serious about stamping out government corruption. Embarrassed by the grant of several millions from the European Union to help the country in seriously eliminating corruption, she recently declared she will accomplish that in three years, a four-year improvement on her consultant's seven-year timetable.

GMA made several promises four years ago. These included turning the economy around, solving the insurgency problem, crushing the Abu Sayyaf, and giving the country clean elections in 2004. None was accomplished; the last brazenly violated. A promise in December 2002 not to run in the 2004 elections only highlighted the streak of duplicity in her words, which no one now can take with confidence.

There is no need to set deadlines (like those set for the police and the military to solve crimes that have remained unsolved for decades anyway) for the eradication of corruption and abuse of authority.

She just has to start and let events take their course. For starters, she can allocate intelligence funds and some of her discretionary funds to augment the Ombudsman and the Sandiganbayan's resources. She can give encouragement and assistance to private groups and NGOs waging war against corruption and venalities in the bureaucracy. This way, she may reduce the hemorrhaging of public funds to the extent that no new taxes need to be raised. If she takes these steps, then we may hopefully be on the road to recovery.

—E.P. DAKANAY JR.,
43 Baltazar St.,
Philamlife Village,
Pamplona, Las Piñas City

Meralco's advertisement on 'least cost' electricity

MERALCO has taken out full-page ads saying: "*Tungkulin naming siguruhing mabibigyan kayo ng pinakamagaling na serbisyo sa pinakamagandang presyo.*"

On the "*Tungkulin*" of Meralco, this is actually mandated by Section 23 of the Electric Power Industry Reform Act, which says: "A distribution utility shall have the obligation to supply electricity in the least cost manner to its captive market." We emphasize the "least cost manner" because Meralco's claim of giving "*pinakamagandang presyo*" raises the question of "*pinakamaganda" para kanino.*

Meralco's claim that the P0.47/kWh Napocor increase was almost cut in half is most likely true, but it hardly tells the true story of generation cost.

In fact, the ones getting "*pinakamagandang presyo*" from Meralco are the independent power producers (IPPs) that are owned by the Lopez Group—First Gas Power Sta. Rita and First Gas Power San Lorenzo; and the other Meralco IPPs, like Quezon Power Phils, Duracom and Philpodeco.

Here are the generation charges of Meralco:

A. In ERC Case No. 2001-646 and 2001-900, Meralco's Petition for Rate Unbundling, the decision issued on March 20, 2003 set the generation charges as follows: Napocor. P2.4664/kWh; Meralco IPPs: P4.2173/kWh; average charge to Meralco customers: P3.4029/kWh.

From the foregoing costs, it is abundantly clear that if Meralco's entire power supply had been sourced from Napocor, Meralco customers would have saved P0.9365/kWh (P3.4029-P2.4664). The Meralco IPPs made a monthly windfall of about P1.4 billion out of Meralco's failure "to supply electricity in the least cost manner" by buying expensive power from its IPPs instead of Napocor.

Incidentally, the ERC March 20 decision and the denial of opposers' Motion for Reconsideration on May 30, 2003 were reversed by the Court of Appeals on July 22, 2004. Meralco's own Motion for Reconsideration was denied by the CA on Jan. 24, 2005, and Meralco's appeal to the Supreme Court remains pending.

B. According to Meralco's letter to Nasecore dated April 28, 2005, signed by Ivanna G. dela Peña, the generation charges for some months were as follows: in Jan. 2005—Napocor, P4.0049/kWh; Meralco IPPs, P5.4679/kWh; average cost to customers, P4.5772/kWh. In February 2005— Napocor, P4.0000/kWh; Meralco IPPs, P4.3247/kWh; average cost to customers, P4.1767/kWh.

In both sample cases, the average generation cost collected by Meralco was higher than the "least cost" Napocor power. We will leave to the readers the computation of the two-month overcharge, given an average Meralco monthly sale of 2-billion kWh, with 45 percent of power supplied by Napocor and 55 percent supplied by Meralco IPPs.

We hope this letter will help to balance the public's perspective on the misleading claims of Meralco.

—PETE L. ILAGAN,
president,
National Association of Electricity Consumers for Reforms,
Unit 616 Roxas Seafront Gardens,
Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City

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Mayor says AFP resort has no building permit

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr. and Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

BORACAY ISLAND, Aklan—The controversial military resort on Boracay is being constructed without a building permit from the municipality, said Malay Mayor Ciceron Cawaling.

Cawaling said they had sent a "first notice of violation" to personnel of the facility two weeks ago after the town's zoning and engineering office discovered that the project did not have any permit.

The Central Command (Centcom) of the Armed Forces of the Philippines was asked to submit the necessary documents and secure clearances, said Cawaling. He said a second and third notice of violation would be issued, if necessary.

"If they fail to comply with the requirements, [the resort] will be close down," Cawaling told the INQUIRER.

Lt. Col. Jefferson Omandam, Centcom spokesperson, said they had not received the notice of violation but were processing documents to comply with the requirements.

He said they failed to secure the permit because they wanted to rush the construction of the facility in time for summer. Construction started in December last year and the "soft opening" was held on April 15.

Omandam said they went ahead with the construction because securing a building permit was "just a minor administrative requirement" and a "procedural matter."

Asked whether he found nothing wrong with the AFP violating government rules and regulations, Omandam said "what is important is that the building plan conforms [with] the rules and regulations and it is safe for occupancy."

He said the "soft opening" was even attended by Aklan Gov. Carlito Marquez, which, he added, "implies" that the facility was "permitted."

The resort in Sitio Sugod in Manoc-Manoc village, dubbed the "Sampaguita Family Recreation Center," was supposedly being built to help raise the morale of soldiers.

The Centcom said funding for the project came from donations through efforts spearheaded by the Kaibigan ng mga Kawal sa Kapuluan Foundation.

KKK president Nelson Yuvallos admitted that the foundation was not yet registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Yuvallos, a Cebu-based businessman, said foundation secretary Virginia Redelosa was tasked with registering the KKK with the SEC, but she was not able to complete the process because they had to pay P1 million in registration fees.

He said the project had already started when the KKK officials were informed about the requirement.

He said they could not pay the fee immediately as they were still raising the amount.

He said Boracay was chosen as the site because the island-resort remained a "dreamland" for ordinary people.

Contrary to media reports, Yuvallos said the resort was not worth P15 million.

He said the foundation placed the project cost at P10 million, depending on the donations. But so far, the KKK has spent only P2 million because the construction was gradual.

Yuvallos said members of the military engineering brigade also rendered free services.

Donations, in cash and in kind, also came from several individuals.

A scale model of the resort complex shows two four-story buildings, two pavilions to serve as administrative offices, and a swimming pool.

The construction was stopped last week due to lack of funds, said Maj. George Gonzales, executive officer of the Centcom's Headquarters Service Group, who has been placed in-charge of the facility.

He denied that the construction was stopped because of the criticisms. "In fact, we got more publicity because AFP personnel became aware of the project."

But Mayor Cawaling said the military resort is "not good" for Boracay. The sight of many heavily uniformed and armed soldiers could cause apprehension among tourists, he said.

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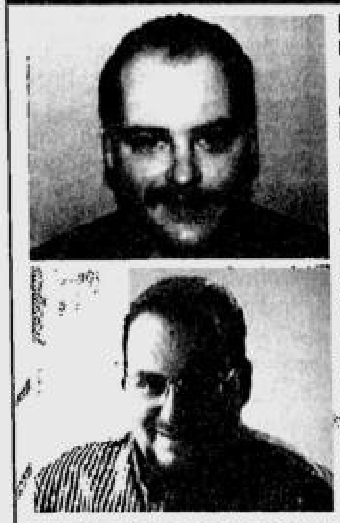

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Again, thank you for your efforts this year. Boracay is the perfect place to celebrate work well done. I wish you a wonderful time and many happy memories of our 20th National Sales Convention.

Melanie Belen
Country Vice-President
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Teacher, classroom shortages face public schools in Cebu

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—The perennial acute shortage of teachers and classrooms will again greet public school students returning to elementary and secondary schools in Cebu today.

Provincial schools division superintendent Recaredo Borgonia said the lack of teachers, estimated to reach up to 400, was caused by the nonrenewal of the contracts of teachers hired by different local government units, using their respective Special Education Fund (SEF).

Borgonia said the lack of classrooms was caused by the expected two-percent increase in enrollment in secondary and elementary schools this school year.

Borgonia said they would need between 300 and 400 more classrooms in high schools and 79-85 classrooms in elementary schools.

Among the towns affected are Liloan, Balamban and Minglanilla, where enrollment increased.

Last year, the province's public school system had 305,000 pupils in the elementary level and 126,000 students in high school.

Borgonia said the division had arranged two classes in one room (one in the morning and the other in the afternoon) to accommodate more enrollees.

He, however, said the province no longer had problems in textbooks, desks and chairs because the provincial government had donated these items.

Cebu hired more than 400 teachers last year through the SEF of the different LGUs, but rehiring them has remained unclear with the new guidelines from the Department of Education.

The new guidelines stipulate that teachers hired through the SEF now have to be screened by the principals of the public schools where they taught, screened again at the district level, and pass the examination to be administered by DepEd, Borgonio said. But only a few of these teachers have qualified in the screening, he added.

To address the shortage of teachers, Borgonia said nonteaching personnel, like those in charge of libraries and school administrators, would be tapped to handle classes.

Cebu's public schools have a teaching force of more than 13,000 (9,000 in the elementary and 4,000 in the high school levels) and more than 1,000 administrators, Borgonia said.

Poverty forcing 'lumad' kids to work for meals

MATI, Davao Oriental—Extreme poverty has been driving *lumad* children from different villages of the province to work as househelp in exchange for free meals.

Julius Mabini, provincial chief of the National Commission for Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), said it was "inevitable" for members of cultural communities to work without pay in urban areas "because of abject poverty."

"And it is very likely that there are already criminal syndicates recruiting *lumad* girls to work in Manila as prostitutes," he said.

Mabini said that much as the NCIP wanted to help, the lack of funds was hampering its efforts.

"We could hardly stop them if they decide to bite the offer of this syndicate because there's nothing we can offer [to help them survive]," he said.

At least three Mandaya girls told the INQUIRER that they did not mind working without monetary compensation.

"At least here, we could eat enough food," Sarah, 13, said.

The prevailing drought has worsened conditions in her village, she said. "All the root crops in our village had wilted ..., so we have no food to eat there," Sarah said.

Erlinda Mahaping, 41, a Mandaya from Baganga town, said she sent her two daughters, aged 9 and 11, to a couple here so she would no longer worry about feeding them.

"I have five other young kids to feed. It's so hard in our village, we have no more food to eat as many of the vegetables we planted, especially root crops, wilted," she said.

Mahaping said she would rather see her children work for food in households than watch them starve to death.

In Boston town, Mandaya children have been working in mining areas and were being paid a measly sum.

Lungga Mangmang Agong Center, a nongovernment organization working with Mandaya communities, said it had already rescued over 100 Mandaya children from mining areas.

The Lungga Mangmang Agong Center was able to save the children from "dehumanizing working conditions" in the mine sites with the help of the International Labor Organization and the Finnish government, the NGO said in a statement.

To prevent the children from returning to the mining areas, the NGO said it had provided livelihood assistance to at least 150 Mandaya families in Boston.

"The parents of these minor workers are no longer forcing their children to work in the mine sites," the group said.

It said the government should help improve the condition of the Mandaya natives by providing them alternative ways to overcome hunger. *Ferdinand O. Zuasola, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Theft of road signs, railings rampant in Quezon towns

LUCENA CITY—Road signs, steel railings and other metal components installed along the Maharlika Highway to help guide motorists, particularly in accident-prone areas in Atimonan-Pagbilao towns, are often vandalized and stolen by unscrupulous persons, thus endangering commuters, according to an official of the Department of Public Works and Highways in Quezon.

"Contrary to public perception, the DPWH regularly maintains the safety of our road. But unfortunately, most of the road signs that we've installed along the highways to guide the motoring public are often lost to robbers," engineer Ronnel Tan, officer in charge of the DPWH-Quezon 2nd Engineering District, said in an interview.

Tan called on the public to help safeguard the safety warning devices by reporting perpetrators to authorities. "Most of our road signs, posts, and safety devices are made of steel and high-quality aluminum that command good prices in the junk market."

The reflectorized warning and directional signs help ensure the safety of the motorists traversing the roads, especially at night, he said.

Fatal road accidents have been recorded along the zigzag diversion road between Atimonan and Pagbilao towns.

Last week, four persons were killed when the car they were riding in collided with a truck.

Motorists have complained of the absence of signs warning of curves and ravines, which makes driving treacherous, especially at night and during bad weather.

Tan said the DPWH was studying the use of other road sign materials that are not susceptible to theft. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Iloilo needs competent teachers, summit told

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Hiring competent teachers topped the to-do list of education officials, politicians and parents during the first Provincial Education Summit held recently.

Education Secretary Florencio Abad said in his keynote address that all teachers hired in public schools should be at least proficient in English.

Schools superintendents reported that they had observed Math teachers who could not perform operations of simple fractions and even long divisions.

Some teachers were hired at the behest of political patrons, and their students were reaping the results of such folly.

Iloilo province, the League of Municipalities-Iloilo chapter and the Department of Education (DepEd)-Iloilo organized the summit on June 2 to tackle issues troubling basic education and ways to solve them.

In her report on the education situation in Western Visayas, Dr. Mina Celia Angostura, DepEd regional chief for elementary education, said the competency of teachers topped the list of issues and problems of her office.

She said teachers lacked competence, had waning commitment and could not integrate values in daily lessons, both in elementary and high school levels.

Angostura said the DepEd intervened by giving in-service training while school heads and supervisors were asked to coach and mentor teachers.

Results from 2005 National Achievement Test (NAT) showed that Iloilo had a mean percentage score of 39.52 in English and 52.75 in Math. The passing rate is 75 percent.

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Teaching excellence

The province has 11,000 public school teachers who handle more than 300,000 students every year.

The West Visayas State University (WVSU), which was declared a center for excellence in teaching from 1995–2000, produces 400 teachers annually, said Dr. Henry Andora, dean of the university's College of Education.

Andora said they were able to track down their graduates in Antique and Guimaras, and found that only 3-5 out of every 100 became public school teachers.

He said top private schools in Iloilo, Manila and other cities in the country had been recruiting their graduates. But they could not get into public schools in Western Visayas because they did not have political patrons to back them up, he noted.

"Our graduates do not like to approach politicians," said Andora.

In his report summarizing the results of pre-summit workshops in five districts of the province, Miagao Mayor Gerardo Flores said that among their recommendations was for Abad to teach local school officials to parry the intervention of politicians.

Selection

In some parts of southern Iloilo, some public school teachers were reportedly chosen not because of their competence or credentials but because their names were written on yellow pad, which was given by a politician to the selection committee.

In the pre-summit workshops, the participants wanted teachers recruited and placed at the district level of DepEd.

The local school boards also wanted to be involved in the selection of school principals.

The province, through the provincial school board, had paid the salaries of teachers in some towns which lack teachers. The funds came from the Special Education Fund or the local government's share in real property tax.

While there was an existing competency problem of teachers, there were also some bright spots.

Angostura said several public school teachers had been named most outstanding by prestigious award-giving bodies in the country, such as Metrobank and the Gintong Ilawan.

Dr. Nenita Pinuela (1998), Ma. Luisa Gibraltar (2003), Lilia Ramos (2003) and Dr. Evelyn Sorolla (2003) were among those who received Metrobank's Most Outstanding Teacher Award.

Dr. Ma. Helena Desiree Terre and Sr. Carmela Pesongco were 2004 and 2005 Gintong Ilawan Educators awardees, respectively.

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ROUNDUP

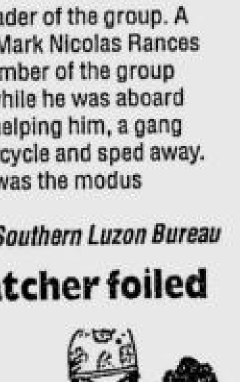
2 killed in landslide

TUGUEGARAO CITY—Two persons were killed while 45 others were hurt when a jeepney fell into a 50-meter ravine in Tanudan, Kalinga on June 1. Supt. James Dogao, Kalinga police director, identified the fatalities as Mary Ann Gacadan, 14, and Elizabeth Tomoldong, 37, both of Barangay Lubo, Tanudan. Dogao said the driver decided to park the jeepney on a roadside near the ravine when he could not negotiate the slippery and muddy road in Barangay Gimma. However, due to continuous rains, the spot occupied by the jeepney was hit by eroding mud. Reports said many passengers failed to get out of the falling vehicle.
Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Bike theft gang busted

LUCENA CITY—Five members of a gang suspected to be behind the rash of motorcycle snatching in this city were arrested Thursday by police after one of their latest victims complained. Supt. Conrado Capa, city police chief, identified the suspects as Mario Aldovino, Jayson Ricafort, Leo Allan Sanggalang, Ramoncito Arconada, and Marlon Layos, the suspected leader of the group. A police report said a certain Mark Nicolas Rances reported to police that a member of the group bumped him from behind while he was aboard his motorcycle. Instead of helping him, a gang member grabbed his motorcycle and sped away. Police investigators said it was the modus operandi of the group.
Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Motorcycle snatcher foiled



CANDELARIA, Quezon—An Army sergeant foiled an attempt by a man to steal his motorcycle in the town proper on Thursday night. A police report said SSgt. Wilfredo Manago was busy using his mobile phone while sitting on his motorcycle when the suspect, Joel Laroz, of Barangay Masalukot, suddenly appeared from behind. The suspect pointed a small bolo at the soldier's neck and asked for the ignition key. Manago resisted and wrestled with the suspect until the soldier was able to draw his .45 cal. service pistol and shoot the suspect in the thigh and arm. The soldier, who is based in the military's Southern Luzon Command, brought the suspect to the hospital.
Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Ash fall from coal-fired plant worries villagers

LUCENA CITY—Residents of a coastal village near the 735-megawatt coal-fired plant of Mirant Pagbilao Corp. have expressed fears of a shower of black ash purportedly coming from the power facility.

Glenn Forbes, program officer of the environmentalist group Tanggol Kalikasan (TK), said he had received information from some residents of Barangay Mayao Castillo here that the power plant had been spewing black ash.

The plant is located in Barangay Polo, Pagbilao and southeast of Mayao Castillo in front of the Tayabas Bay.

Mirant Pagbilao, a subsidiary of Mirant Philippines Corp., is considered the largest private producer of electricity in the country.

Mirant public affairs manager Greggy Romualdez said his company was looking into the TK report.

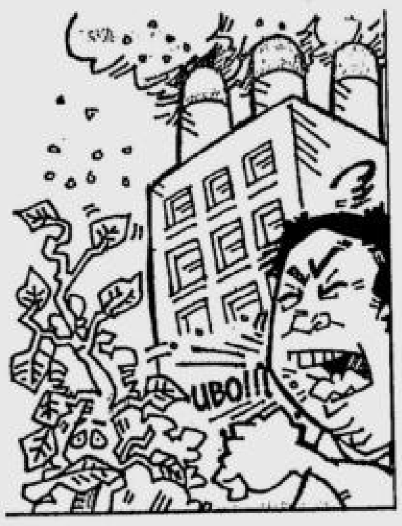
He added that Mirant strictly complies with and even exceeds the implementation of all pertinent environment rules and regulations as mandated by law.

A TK team that went to the village on May 12 observed that oily black ashes and dark gray dust were suspended on the leaves and trunks of coconut trees and on the leaves of other fruit trees in the area.

"Our gathering of samples was documented on video," Forbes said.

The TK report noted that compared to the usual verdant color of coconut leaves, those covered by dark gray ash have turned yellowish to brownish, while young coconuts turned yellowish gold to brownish.

"Generally, the gray ashes settled on one side of the trees only (the side facing southeast), suggesting that the material was blown by the wind coming from the east," the report said.



The TK team said black ashes were also found in Barangay Alupaye, Pagbilao.

The residents told the TK team that the ash shower usually occurred at dusk or nighttime.

"Each time ash emission occurred, the residents said they experienced heavy smog at dawn. It's like zero visibility within about 10 meters in the morning," the report quoted some of the village residents.

Julio Cuasay, a resident of Mayao Castillo and chair of the Lucena City Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council, said the villagers experienced the ash showers sometime in January and during the first week of May, starting from 10 p.m. to 11 a.m. the day after.

He said the ashes came from the plant's chimney.

"Our personnel are fully committed to ensuring that our operations will continue to be safe to the environment and to residents. We will take the appropriate measures to rectify any lapse in our operations if and when necessary," Romualdez said in a statement.

On Tuesday, Greenpeace activists stormed Mirant's headquarters in Manila with banners branding the US power company as a polluter and climate killer.

In a report, Greenpeace said results of tests on ash byproducts taken from Mirant's coal power plants in Toledo City in Cebu found the presence of mercury, a known carcinogen.

A Mirant company official said the mercury emissions of its plant were within "tolerable levels." *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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Lepanto workers on strike

BAGUIO CITY—About 1,600 members of the employees' union of Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. in Mankayan, Benguet struck on Thursday morning following a deadlock in collective bargaining talks with management.

The workers, belonging to the Lepanto Employees' Union (LEU), are demanding a wage increase, rest and sick leave credits, and retirement, housing and medical benefits.

Annette Pala, a staff member of the private Cordillera Labor Center, said the miners started to join the picketline in front of the company's five gates at Tubo, Nagak, Buaki, Mill and 900 Level at 7 a.m.

Lawyer Cris Martinez, LCMC human resources, training and administration manager and the company's chief negotiator, said many workers had already left the picket line and the operations of the mining company returned to normal on Thursday afternoon.

Martinez said the strike was illegal.

Members of the LEU and Lepanto Security Force Union filed a notice of strike in April to press their demand for higher wages.

The Department of Labor and Employment assumed jurisdiction over the dispute in May.

Hague Mangaoang, a union officer, said the number of striking employees had not dwindled.

Mangaoang said LCMC management representatives met with union officials on Thursday afternoon to settle the dispute. *Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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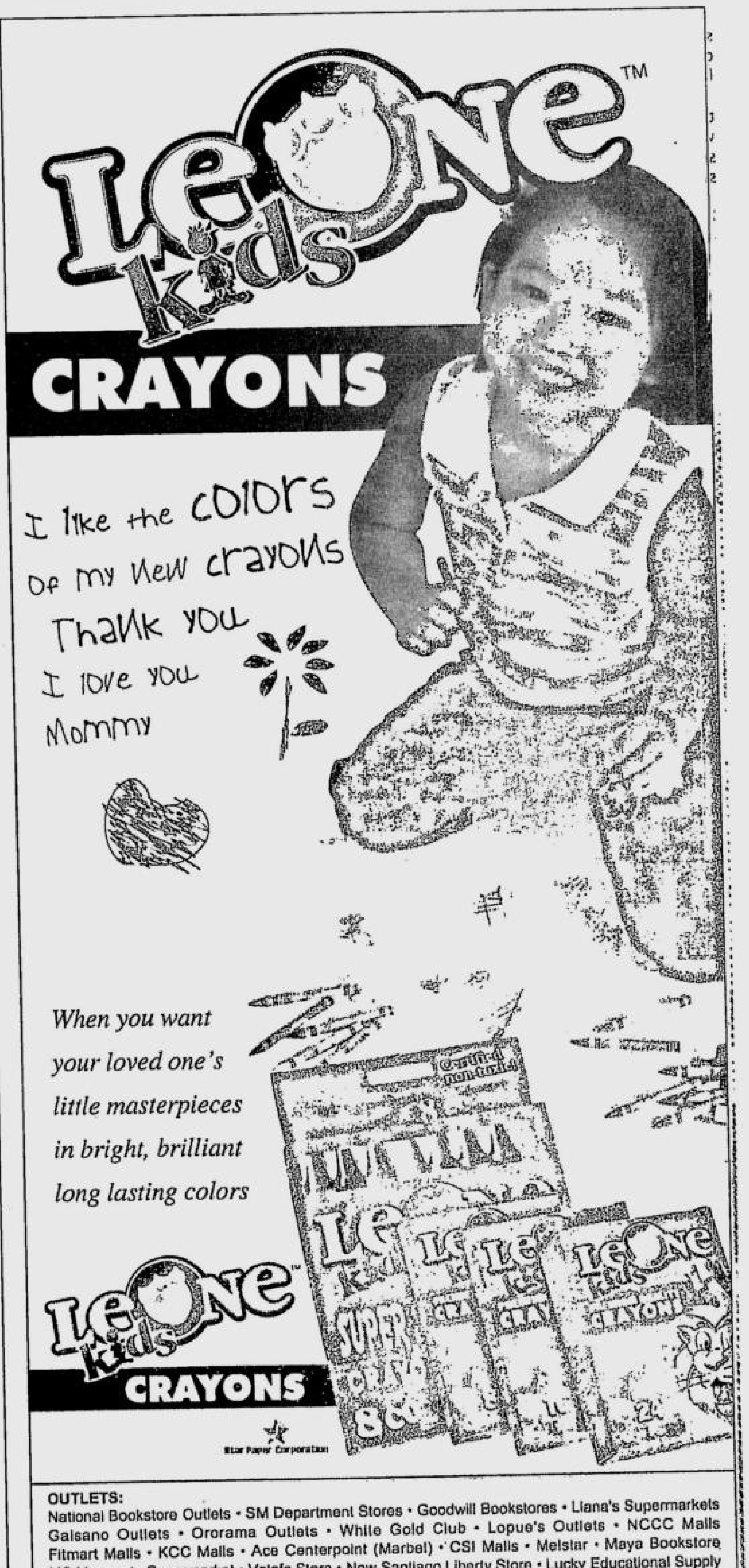

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Former presidential assistant denies 'jueteng' bagman role

By Christine O. Avendaño

A FORMER presidential assistant for Bicol, whom a "jueteng" informer had claimed was a bagman receiving gambling payoffs for First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, surfaced yesterday and vehemently denied the accusation.

Mario Espinosa, who just arrived from a three-week trip abroad, said the accusations were "most cruel and irresponsible."

Espinosa said he was talking with his lawyers on possible legal action he could take to clear his name and "punish the persons responsible for the false and malicious allegations."

One of three jueteng bagmen, who talked to the INQUIRER last month about government officials allegedly benefiting from payoffs, had pointed to Espinosa as a supposed bagman for the President's husband.

'Totally shocked'

The informant, who hails from Legazpi City in Albay, claimed that he started collecting jueteng payola for Espinosa in April last year, or a month before the May 2004 elections. The money supposedly exceeded P500,000.

"I was totally shocked by the lies peddled in the report about me," Espinosa said in a statement.

He decried that the media did not even try to reach him and get his side.

Espinosa denied he was involved in jueteng or that he was involved with a woman named Lily—who was identified in the INQUIRER story as his supposed common-law wife.

Wedding anniversary

The INQUIRER source said he delivered the jueteng protection money to the house Espinosa was living in with Lily.

Espinosa said the report was unfair to him and his wife Carmencita.

"We received the report in the midst of our silver wedding anniversary celebration abroad. Suffice it to say that this report ruined our celebration and caused us deep mental and emotional anguish," he said.

He dared his unnamed accuser to come out in the open and face him.

Stop-jueteng campaign

Espinosa said he could not be involved in jueteng because he had always advocated and worked for the eradication of the illegal numbers game.

Saying he was ready to provide proof of his efforts against jueteng in Bicol, the former presidential assistant for the region released a letter he had written to Chief Supt. Jaime Lasar, then police regional director for Bicol, on Jan. 21, 2004.

In the letter, Espinosa had sought Lasar's cooperation in enforcing Ms Arroyo's order to step up the government's anti-gambling campaign after he received reports that "jueteng is again operating openly in the region."

"You are not only being maligned about jueteng, your family is also being maligned," Espinosa said.

2 ex-gambling lords ready to link 'big names'

From page A1

have another witness with him for today's hearing—and he claimed the man would also have a lot more to say than Mayor, the prelate's first witness.

"He sure knows a lot about jueteng, definitely more than what Mayor knows," Cruz said. "It's now just a question of whether he'll be allowed to speak."

Like Mayor, this second witness is also supposedly a big-time jueteng operator.

Payola records

The witness is expected to bring with him records of jueteng transactions which he had kept since the time he was still in the illegal racket, according to the bishop.

Cruz said the documents would most likely include the names of people receiving monthly payola from jueteng operators.

The bishop said he never perused the papers or sought to hear everything the witness knew about jueteng to avoid influencing whatever the witness wanted to say at the Senate.

Claims validated?

"I only wanted to know if he was telling the truth, if he was consistent with his answers, so I asked a lot of questions at a quick pace," Cruz said. "I also validated his stories with what I know. In the end, I was convinced that he's not lying."

Like Mayor, the new witness approached the bishop through an intermediary because "he didn't want to live the kind of life he has anymore."

"He said he no longer wanted a life spent in hiding," Cruz said.

One witness drops out

"In a way, the new witness will confirm some of the things that Mayor has already said. You have to understand that they move within the same circle so they know each other."

But like Mayor, the second witness hardly had any contact with the people who purportedly received payola, Cruz said.

The bishop also said he had decided to drop one of his original eight witnesses, fearing that former confederates in the illegal racket might harm him or his family.

Cruz described his erstwhile witness as a former "local manager" of jueteng operations in his province. The man was supposedly in charge of determining how much payola would go to certain local officials.

Who's telling the truth?

At times, the jueteng manager himself purportedly delivered the money.

Cruz said the jueteng manager was still trying to convince at least four former bagmen who had personally delivered payola to jueteng protectors and beneficiaries to testify at the Senate.

The inquiry is being conducted by the Senate committees on public order and illegal drugs, and games, amusement and sports.

"We'll be able to find out who's telling the truth," games committee chair Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid said, referring to the expected testimony of Naguit, Katigbak and Maglanque.

"We will know from these people if the allegations against Mikey Arroyo are true. They've been invited precisely to shed light on these allegations."

Alleged Lacson man

At last week's hearing, Mayor claimed he had given bagmen P600,000 a month intended for Ms Arroyo's elder son.

Mayor alleged that at one time, he personally met with Naguit at Rembrandt Hotel and talked about the protection money. Katigbak and Maglanque were with Naguit, he also claimed.

Also invited to the hearing were Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes, PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao and Batangas Gov. Armand Sanchez, who had been tagged by Mayor as an alleged gambling lord.

Sanchez has denied the accusation.

At today's hearing, Mayor is expected to be grilled on allegations by Representatives Luis Villafuerte of Camarines Sur and Ignacio Arroyo of Negros Occidental that he was "a political hatchetman" of Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson.

"He has to answer these allegations. We should be fair," Lapid said.

On allegations that the Senate inquiry was part of an opposition plot to destabilize the administration, inquiry co-chair Sen. Manuel Villar said: "Nobody has talked to me about destabilization and I don't intend to participate in any. We're just doing our job."

Protectors against legalized 'jueteng,' says book

By Luige A. del Puerto

PROTECTORS of "jueteng" would never allow the underground numbers game to be legalized because that would deprive them of the huge payoffs they regularly receive, says a book on jueteng written in 1999 by a retired police general.

It says protection from politicians and policemen allowed the illegal numbers game to flourish.

"The (jueteng) operations become very safe because the police and local officials have been provided [a] tempting amount for protection," the late Wilfredo Reotutar said in his book, "All About Gambling in the Philippines."

"This is the most ostensible explanation why the illegal numbers game of jueteng continues to proliferate despite strong pronouncements of the government to stop it."

Reotutar, who died several years ago, chaired in 1993 a police committee tasked to study a proposal to legalize jueteng. The committee's findings were later forwarded to Congress.

The book looked into legal and illegal gambling activities in the country, tracing their development and how they thrived.

Reotutar said in his book that the protection money from jueteng then went as high as 30 percent of the total bets, and this translated into millions of pesos that was almost impossible to refuse.

It was not, therefore, unusual to hear that a provincial director in a jueteng-rich area got P1 million a month, he said. (Independent sources placed the "jueteng take" today at 34 percent of the gross.)

Reotutar had no doubt that jueteng corrupted government officials.

Even at the time, there were already gambling lords so powerful they were able to interfere in the assignment of police officers "who (did) not toe the line," Reotutar said.

Gambling lords supported only politicians sympathetic to them, influencing the outcome of elections, according to Reotutar.

Malacañang open to truth commission

From page A1

linking members of her family to jueteng payola and she wanted these allegations investigated.

But Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. questioned the wisdom of having such a commission.

"How independent can an independent commission be when the appointing power will still be the President?" the opposition leader asked.

Let it be

Pimentel said: "It is still best to have the Senate look into [the problem] because there you have the benefit of divergent views."

Salceda, who has denied receiving gambling payoffs, called for the creation of an independent panel to consolidate all inquiries into the jueteng scandal and look into the extent of jueteng in the country.

He said such a panel would be similar to the truth and reconciliation commission on apartheid formed by South African leader Nelson Mandela.

Colleagues opposed

"We will not back down from the investigation," said Pimentel.

Some of Salceda's House colleagues opposed his proposal.

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero said lawmakers would look foolish if they abruptly terminated their ongoing inquiries.

"The ongoing hearings must be given due course and Congress must be allowed to finish its job. Besides, both the administration and opposition are represented in the committees, and in fact it is the DOJ [Department of Justice], NBI [National Bureau of Investigation] that appear to be lawyering for the administration," said Escudero.

He said the ongoing congressional inquiries were not one-sided because both the administration and the opposition were amply represented.

Useless?

"If we will use it to gain political mileage, they can always block it and bring the focus of the inquiry back to jueteng. That's the theory behind democracy. If we quit now, we will look stupid," said Escudero.

Anakpawis party-list Rep. Crispin Beltran bristled at Salceda's idea.

"Does Representative Salceda think the investigations are useless? Some might say that he is being defensive and sniping against the credibility of the investigation because his own name cropped up," Beltran said.

He said Salceda had no right to say that the separate inquiries now being conducted by the two chambers of Congress would go nowhere because "political bodies are susceptible to politicking."

An insult

Beltran added that Salceda's recommendation was "an insult [to] both the Senate and House committees conducting the investigations."

He said it would be best if Salceda just shut up, or confined his comments to economic matters where he professed to have an expertise.

Beltran said the current investigations were clearly achieving results. "Why stop now only to put up another body that will investigate the same thing?" he said.

Anak ng Mindanao party-list Rep. Mujiv Hataman said the truth commission would not be able to ferret out the truth if it was the President who appointed its members.

Support for commission

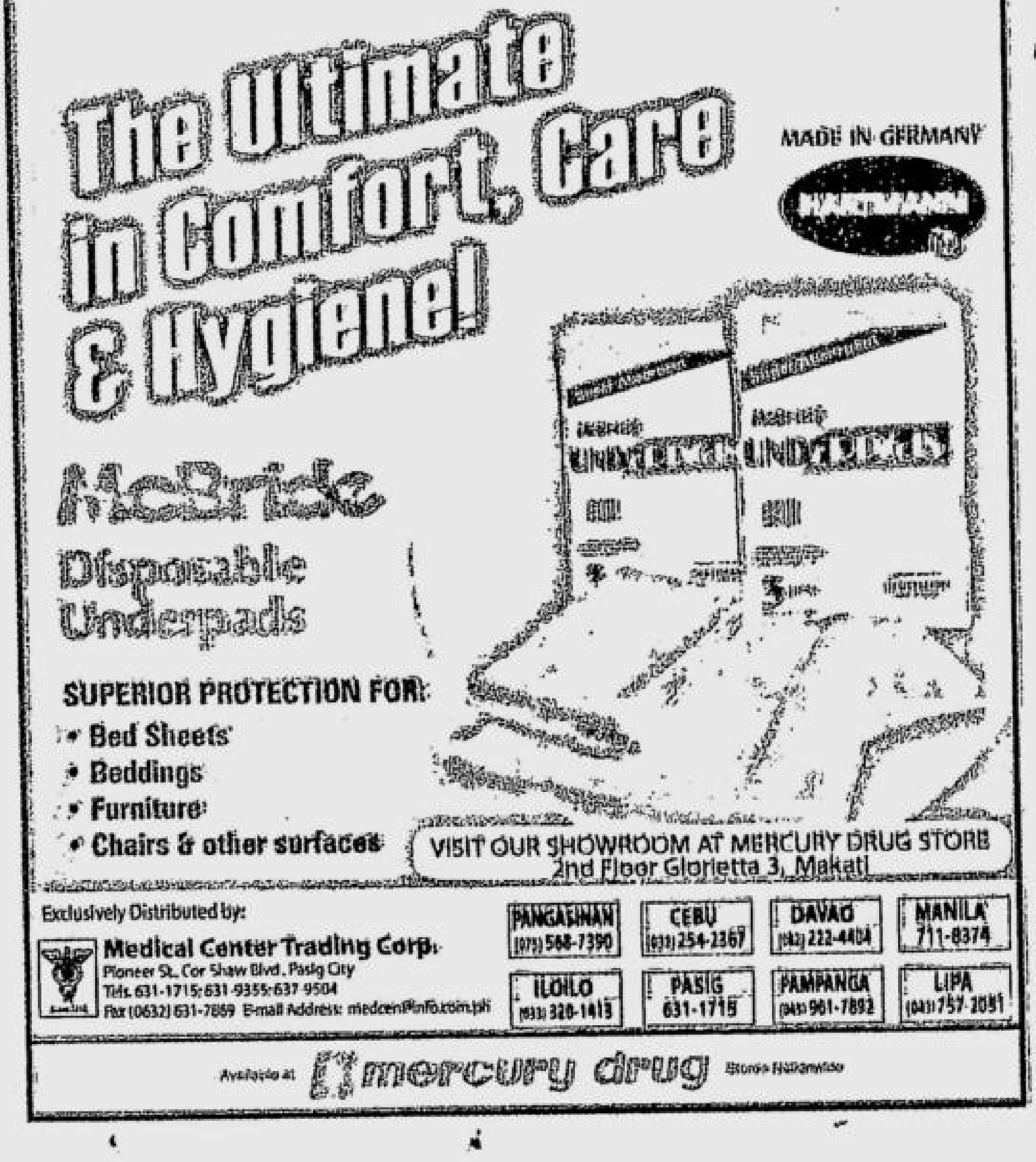
"The people will still be suspicious and doubt the result if the President will have a hand in creating the body. The government should take the inquiry seriously so that this will not lead to another [popular] uprising," said Hataman.

Rep. Robert Ace Barbers said he was in favor of the Salceda proposal as long as Archbishop Oscar Cruz headed the proposed body.

"I've been trying to espouse that since last week. We should get one representative per sector—religious, academe, military, retired justices and ex-politicians, or those personalities with unquestionable integrity," said Barbers.

Antipolo Rep. Ronaldo Puno said Salceda's proposal was timely.

"It's bad for senators or congressmen to be investigating jueteng if their peers are themselves under suspicion. Also, these investigations clearly are not in aid of legislation but prosecutorial in character," said Puno.



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Tale of the tape part of destabilization–Bunye

From page A1

purportedly containing a conversation between President Macapagal-Arroyo and an unnamed election official in which they talked about rigging the May 2004 election, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

Opposition lawmakers denied Bunye's claim which was made in a press statement and radio interviews.

"If we had such a tape, I would have exposed it a long time ago," said Sen. Sergio Osmeña III.

The US Embassy in Manila also denied knowledge of the tape, or of the alleged opposition efforts to undermine the government.

"Intelligence reports reaching the Palace point to another desperate plot of some segments of the opposition to smear and destabilize the administration via a purported taped conversation between the President and a certain Comelec commissioner plotting election fraud," Bunye said.

Depths of despair

"The same reports proffer a wild story that the tape came from US government sources, thereby suggesting some kind of official US involvement in the plot to oust the President," he said.

Bunye did not name the official of the Commission on Elections or provide any other details. He said he did not have a copy of the tape.

He said the allegation of election fraud was a "pure concoction."

The Palace official also said he did not think any US official was involved in an attempt to destabilize a friendly government.

"We are not surprised at the depths of despair that the opposition can reach, considering the failed jueteng caper against the First Family," Bunye said, referring to testimony in last week's Senate hearing on the illegal numbers racket controversy.

Over RMN radio, Bunye said he expected that the opposition would disclose the tape and its contents either yesterday or today. He said the tape would be used as evidence of the opposition in its claim that the 2004 election won by Ms Arroyo had been rigged.

He said the opposition would make it look like the tape had come from US government sources in order to make its story more believable.

National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales said he heard a report about this taped conversation after the May 2004 election but doubted its authenticity.

He said it was easier to come up with a fake tape than to intercept a cellular phone call. This requires sophisticated equipment not available in the country, he added.

"I'm really surprised why this report was just being mentioned now," Gonzales said. He noted that apparently the opposition was taking advantage of the low performance rating of the President, as well as the ongoing jueteng controversy.

Government panicking

Opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson said he heard about the supposed tape two months ago but could not confirm the story.

"If we get more details from Bunye, we will make a more apt reply," said Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr.

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero laughed off Bunye's claim saying the administration was "panicking" and was "beginning to imagine things."

"This confirms what we have been saying that any destabilization this government is experiencing, real or perceived, is self-inflicted," Escudero said. *With reports from Michael Lim Ubac and TJ Burgonio*

Apologize or leave, RP envoy told

From page A1

"Just like the Nazis treated the Jews, you know, that's how the immigration police treat us," he was quoted as saying in the interview, which was published in a Jerusalem weekly and other newspapers across the country. "They don't think twice about raiding a Filipino home in the wee hours of the morning."

Apologize or leave

Opposition lawmaker Joseph Lapid, a Holocaust survivor and former justice minister, told Army Radio on Saturday that Modena's comments were out of line.

"He should apologize in public or pack his things and go back home to the Phillipines," Lapid said.

Modena said in a telephone interview that he was scheduled to meet with Israeli chief of protocol, Ambassador Yizhak Eldan, today at the ministry's office in Jerusalem to discuss the case. He said he had filed several protests with the Israeli government citing incidents of abuses against Filipinos but they had not been answered.

Modena said he made clear in his interviews that he was specifically describing actions of the immigration police and that Israelis are warm people who treat Filipinos as they do their families.

Modena said blacks, Thais and Indians are also mistreated by immigration police. "So what do you call that? That's racism," he said.

The ambassador said he had received calls from Israeli nationals congratulating him for his press statement.

30,000 Filipinos in Israel

The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach Gilbert Asuque, spokesperson of the Department of Foreign Affairs, for comment.

Israel has an estimated 300,000 foreign workers, many of them without work permits. They include some 30,000 Filipinos, most of whom work as maids and caregivers.

Many foreign workers live in difficult conditions and say they receive a low living wage. In recent years amid growing unemployment, Israel has begun to crack down on illegal workers.

Israel's foreign ministry spokesperson Mark Regev said the reported comments by Modena were not consistent with "the excellent relationship" between Manila and Tel Aviv, and if the quotes were accurate, they would be considered "offensive in the extreme."

"Anyone serving in Israel should know the centrality of the Holocaust in the Jewish experience, the uniqueness of the historical occurrence and the sensitivity that the Holocaust has played in the Israeli public," Regev said. *AP*

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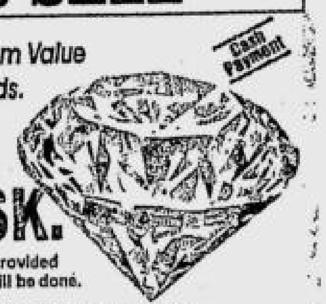

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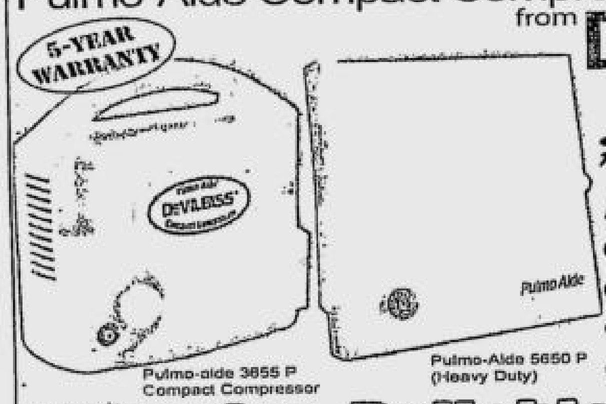
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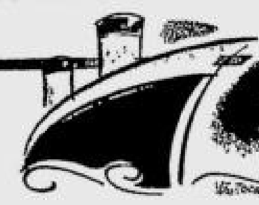

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Indie films share critics' top prize

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

THE SUDDEN downpour and ensuing flash flood failed to dampen the spirit of independent filmmakers who eventually swept this year's Urian Awards, the country's top critics' prize for movies.

The 28th Gawad Urian, handed out by the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino, was held at the AFP Theater in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, on June 4.

In spite of the "militarist" venue, independent filmmakers were calling for a "revolution in Pinoy cinema" within earshot of army men in fatigues.

"The floodgates are open; independent filmmakers are now free," declared Paul I. Tañedo, who produced the 10-hour epic "Ebolusyon ng Isang Pamilyang Pilipino," which in turn shared the Best Picture award with another indie effort, "Panaghoy sa Suba," produced by actor Cesar Montano's CM Films.

"The door is opening for us," agreed actor-director-producer Montano. "It is encouraging to know that even small movies like ours can win awards."

It was Montano's first time to win an Urian and, as if making up for lost time, he went home with three major trophies that night: Best Picture, Best Director and Best Actor. "It inspires us to continue with our work and keep producing quality movies," Montano described his triple whammy to the INQUIRER.

Director Lav Diaz, who worked on "Ebolusyon" for 10 years, romped away with the Best Screenplay plum.

It's sweet vindication for the maverick filmmaker, who labors outside (and rants against) the dominant studio system. "As Paul said: There is no reason not to make good movies now that we are all free," Diaz told INQUIRER Entertainment.

'Bunso'

The Best Short Film award went to "Bunso" by Ditsi Carolino and Consuelo Foundation. Recently, "Bunso" won the Best Director prize for Carolino at the 7th Annual International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival in Prague.

Another world-class Filipino artist, film editor Jess Navarro, was honored with a Lifetime Achievement award (Natatanging Gawad Urian) for his impressive body of work—particularly, for such internationally acclaimed films as "Batch '81," "Kisapmata," "Sister Stella L.," "Jose Rizal" and "Dekada '70."

However, studio productions like "Sabel" (Regal), "Milan" (Star Cinema) and "Sigaw" (Megavision/Regal) were not completely shut out.

Best Editing went to Marya Ignacio for "Milan." Best Supporting Actress was given to first-time nominee Iza Calzado for "Sigaw."

"Sabel," for its part, grabbed two trophies: Best Supporting Actor for Wendell Ramos and Best Actress for Judy Ann Santos.

"It makes all my hard work for the past 10 years worth it," Ramos enthused.

A jubilant Santos echoed Ramos' sentiments and beamed with happiness backstage. It was a fitting reward, she explained, after going through the toughest test in her career, referring to her recent brush with the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) for unpaid taxes in 2002.

"*Pasado ito sa* BIR (This passed the BIR)!" she joked.

Other winners were, for Best Production Design: Patti Eustaquio, Jun Sabayton and Rishab Tibon, "Ebolusyon ng Isang Pamilyang Pilipino";

Best Cinematography: Ely Cruz, "Panaghoy sa Suba";

Best Music Scoring: Nonong Buencamino, "Panaghoy sa Suba," and,

Best Sound: Angie Reyes and Nestor Mutia, "Panaghoy sa Suba."

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Bring an umbrella, Pagasa tells students

By DJ Yap

DON'T forget your umbrella, raincoat and boots when you go to school today.

That is the advice of a government weather forecaster who said rain would likely greet thousands of students and teachers in Metro Manila as they troop back to school today.

"Expect more rains, particularly early in the morning," said Nonoy About, duty forecaster at the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

About said "moderate rain" expected on Metro Manila already means above 60 millimeters of rain, enough to flood some areas.

According to the Pagasa website, Metro Manila will have "mostly cloudy skies with rainshowers and thunderstorms," with light to moderate winds blowing from the southwest and west.

Although a storm, Typhoon "Dante," was expected to move away from the Philippines, it already triggered rain, particularly in Western Luzon and Metro Manila, About said.

This means the next few days will be rainier, he said, advising students and teachers not to forget their rain gear such as umbrellas and raincoats.

The rains will be even stronger than the heavy downpour that fell on Metro Manila last Saturday, the meteorologist said.

Thousands of mostly public school students are expected to start classes today. Many other schools, especially colleges and universities, have scheduled the first day of schoolyear 2005-2006 for next week.

School opening this year coincided with the start of the rainy season.

About advised Metro Manila residents to monitor TV and radio announcements of possible class suspensions, so they would not have to brave the rain and floods.

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Asian Pacific Society of Cardiology
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9th Asian Pacific Congress on Cardiac Rehabilitation

June 9-10, 2005 EDSA Shangri-La Hotel, Mandaluyong City

Messages

Greetings!

In behalf of the Organizing Committee, it is with great pleasure that we invite you to attend the 9th Asian Pacific Congress on Cardiac Rehabilitation to be held in Manila on June 9 and 10, 2005. Several topics of interest for cardiovascular specialists, rehabilitation experts, allied paramedical staff and postgraduate trainees are being lined-up with a number of well-renowned experts worldwide invited as members of the faculty. The scientific sessions include plenary lectures on the evolution of Cardiac Rehabilitation in the Asia Pacific region and the current status of CARE with respect to practice guidelines in the region. Several simultaneous sessions are also lined-up which represent the core essentials of Cardiac Rehabilitation, plus updates on selected cardiovascular topics. These topics represent the holistic aspects of cardiac rehabilitation in germane to the conference theme: "Cardiac Rehabilitation: Towards an Integrated Cardiovascular Care".

We look forward to meeting you in the Philippines in June 2005 and for a lighter note, we have also prepared various social events to complement the scientific aspects of the conference.

See you soon and Mabuhay!

Antonio S. Sibulo Jr., MD
Overall Chairman

Leandro C. Bongosia, MD
Chairman, Scientific Committee

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Program

TIME	Thursday June 9			Friday June 10		
7:30 - 9:30 am	7:30 am - 4:00 pm REGISTRATION (Lower Lobby (Pre-Registered & Onsite Registration)) 8:30 - 9:30 am OPENING CEREMONIES (Isla 2)			9:00 - 10:00 am PLENARY SESSION (Meet the Experts) Status of CARE: From Guidelines to Practice in the Asia Pacific Region: Expert views from India (Dr. Anil Kumar), Indonesia (Dr. Dede Kusmana), Philippines (Dr. Marisa P. Joson), Nepal (Dr. M. Raj Pandey) and Thailand (Dr. Visal Kantaratanakul)		
9:45 - 10:00 am	Visit Exhibits / Coffee Break			Visit Exhibits / Coffee Break		
10:00 - 12:00 nn	SIMULTANEOUS Symposia 1			SIMULTANEOUS Symposia 3		
	Congestive Heart Failure I (Isla 3)	Coronary Artery Disease (Isla 2)	Women and Elderly (Isla 1)	Obesity (Isla 3)	Diabetes Mellitus (Isla 2)	CR in patients with Valvular Heart Diseases and Arrhythmias (Isla 1)
10:00 - 10:30 am	CHF as a GLOBAL Epidemic Dr Romeo A. Divinagracia (Phils.)	Risk Modification: Dyslipidemia and HTN Dr Anil Kumar (India)	The Woman as a Cardiovascular Patient Dr Esperanza I. Cabral (Philippines)	10:15-10:45 am Global risk of Obesity: "Globesity" Dr [illegible] (Philippines)	Pathophysiologic basis of Insulin Resistance: Implications for CV Disease Dr Augusto Litonjua (Philippines)	Exercise Physiology in Valvular Heart Disease Patient Dr [illegible] (Philippines)
10:30 - 11:00 am	Endothelial Function in Heart Failure Dr [illegible] (Japan)	Risk Modification: Smoking Cessation Dr Audrey Tan (Singapore)	Management Issues in CVD in women Dr Rajadurai Jeyamalar (Malaysia)	10:45-11:15 am Weight Reduction and its Benefits Dr Visal Kantaratanakul (Thailand)	Type 2DM: Can it be Prevented? Dr [illegible] (Germany)	CARE in Patients with Arrhythmias Dr William T. Chua (Philippines)
11:00 - 11:30 am	Biomarkers in HF: What Do They Offer? Dr Romeo J. Saavedra (Philippines)	Advances in the Treatment Strategies for ACS DR Michael Lim (Singapore)	CVD in the elderly Dr Miguel Ramos (Philippines)	11:15-11:45 am Obesity & Cardiovascular Risk Dr Vincent T. Valencia (Phils.)	Care of the Diabetic Patient: Cardiologist/Endocrinologist Interface Dr Jorge Sison (Phils.) Dr [illegible] Sison (Phils.)	Exercise Prescription with Devices Dr Giselle D. Dumanga (Phils.)
11:30 - 12:00 nn	Outcomes of CARE in CHF Dr Ray Squires (USA)	CARE and the CAD patient Dr Helen Ong-Garcia (Philippines)	Barriers to CARE participation Ms. Kathleen Zarling (USA)			
12:00 - 2:00 pm	LUNCH / Satellite Symposia					
	(Isla 3) Glaxo Smith Kline	(Isla 2) AstraZeneca		(Isla 3) Novartis	(Isla 2) Servier Phils.	
2:00 - 2:45 pm	PLENARY LECTURE 1 Exercise Training & Vascular Biology Dr Homobono B. Calleja (Philippines)			SIMULTANEOUS Symposia 4 (2:00 - 4:00 pm)		
2:45 - 3:00 pm	Visit Exhibits / Coffee Break			Psychosocial Aspects of CARE (Isla 3)	Pulmonary/Vascular Rehabilitation (Isla 2)	ORAL PRESENTATION (Mactan)
3:00 - 4:30 pm	SIMULTANEOUS Symposia 2 Exercise Prescription (Isla 3)	Dietary Prescription (Isla 2)	FREE COMMUNICATIONS (Isla 1)	2:00 - 2:30 pm Psyche of a Cardiac Patient (Patient's point-of-view) Dr Abdias Aquino (Philippines)	Exercise Intolerance: Pulmonary Aspects Dr Ben S. Trinidad (Philippines)	
3:00 - 3:30 pm	The Art of Exercise Prescription Dr Ray Squires (USA)	The Truth Behind FAD Diets Ms Kathleen Zarling (USA)		2:30 - 3:00 pm Strategies for Stress Management Dr [illegible] (Philippines)	Pulmonary Rehabilitation Dr Fernando A. Punzal (Philippines)	
3:30 - 4:00 pm	Setting up a CARE Program Dr Rene B. [illegible] (Philippines)	The Healthy Diets in the Asia Pacific Region Ms Sannette Orbeta (Philippines)		3:00 - 3:30 pm Sexual Rehabilitation in CVD Patients Dr Juliano Panganiban (Philippines)	Rheological Factors in Peripheral Vascular Diseases [illegible]	
4:00 - 4:30 pm	Optimizing Resources in the development of CARE Dr Dede Kusmana (Indonesia)	Dietary Prescription for the Cardiac Patient Dr Luisito O. Llido (Philippines)		3:30 - 4:00 pm Computerization and Emerging Technology in the Cardiac Rehab Setting [illegible]	How to Rehabilitate Patients with Peripheral Vascular Disease [illegible]	
4:30 - 6:30 pm	EXERCISE FOR THE BUSY PHYSICIAN Prof. Hercules Callanta (Philippines)			CLOSING CEREMONIES & FELLOWSHIP NIGHT (6:00 PM) (Isla 1 & Isla 2)		

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Arroceros park digging yields more 'artifacts'

RUNNING priest Fr. Robert Reyes and his team of amateur archaeologists found pieces of broken ceramics, believed to be ancient Chinese pottery, in heaps of dirt at the Arroceros Forest Park in Manila yesterday.

Reyes believes that the ceramic shards belonged to 16th-century Chinese settlers who set up a colony in Arroceros all the way to the Mehan Garden.

The National Museum, which declared the park an archaeological site in April 2003, earlier told the Manila City government to stop its digging in Arroceros because the park may still contain artifacts.

Artifacts were found in excavations in the Mehan Garden, the Metropolitan Theater building and the Government Service Insurance System compound.

"(Atienza's diggings) is a complete disregard of history, culture and nature," Reyes said.

On deaf ears

However, the museum's call landed on deaf ears when Manila Mayor Lito Atienza's men started excavations last Saturday for the construction of a building for the Department of Education-Manila.

Reyes said he expected to find more artifacts as his team would continue to sift through the piles of dirt.

Reyes added that they found at least 20 pieces of blue and white ceramic, similar to vases used in the 17th century.

The findings of Reyes' team will be sent to the National Museum for dating. The findings are also hoped to further establish links between Filipino and Chinese peoples long before the Spanish occupation, Reyes said.

"The government should conduct its affairs properly," he said of the diggings done by Atienza's men.

In an earlier interview with the INQUIRER, curator Angel Bautista advised the city officials to get a clearance from the National Museum before proceeding with their excavation.

Reyes' test dig at the park was part of rites to mark World Environment Day yesterday.

Miko Morelos, trainee

3 die as flood sweeps car away

By DJ Yap
and Tarra V. Quismundo

RAIN came, and with it death.

Floods spawned by a heavy downpour swept away a Toyota Corolla and pushed it into a rampaging creek, killing all three people on board Saturday night in Quezon City.

Police said floodwater buffeted the car as it was traveling along E. Rodriguez Street in Carmel V Subdivision, Barangay Tandang Sora, at about 7:30 p.m.

Strong currents then swept the car for about 30 meters toward Mindanao Avenue, where the car was pushed off a bridge, into a creek.

Residents tried to help the car passengers by opening the car, but flood carried two of them away, police said.

Although rescuers managed to get Stella Magno, 48, out of the car, she was already dead, presumably from the impact of the fall, police said.

At about 11 p.m., the body of 2-year-old car passenger Amanda Lorenzo was found near a garbage pile in Barangay Talayan Riverside, police said.

A few hours later, residents discovered the body of the third passenger, Teresita Guevarra, 60, under the Westriverside Bridge in Barangay Del Monte.

Both victims sustained scratches and wounds on the head.

Yesterday, following the flood-related deaths, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) again appealed to residents to help prevent the buildup of water on the streets of the metropolis.

Saying it could not hold off floods by itself, the MMDA asked residents to oblige themselves in clearing clogged drains in front of their houses.

"My appeal is, if it's possible, when there's heavy rain, maybe you could go out of your homes, wear shorts and boots, then declog inlets and drainages," said MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando over the agency's weekly program over radio dzBB.

"It would be very easy. It would take a simple stick, while the water has not risen yet," he added.

Residents' initiative, Fernando said, could help prevent pocket-flooding in Metro Manila with the coming of the rainy season.

"That's all that we ask because you see, we do not have enough people to watch over the inlets and drainages all the time," said Fernando, talking to his audience in Filipino.

The agency's flood control units in 11 district offices have only about 1,000 men.

On Saturday night and Sunday morning, many parts of Metro Manila were submerged in flood.

MMDA Metrobase, the agency's real-time road monitoring unit, said most of the floodings the other night and early yesterday were gutter-deep. However, it added that most of the metro's roads remained passable.

Meanwhile, Fernando said floodwater on Katipunan Avenue in Quezon City reached waist-level, while deep flood once again hit flood-prone Dimasalang Street in Manila.

"Because of heavy rain, small piles of trash including plastic bags are washed toward inlets. Now, when that blocks the drainage, however small that plastic bag is, the water could not go through it," explained Fernando.

He added that the MMDA has already cleared 90 percent of Metro Manila's creeks of garbage.

Grenade attack kills 2-year-old, maid in Manila

By Margaux C. Ortiz

A HAND grenade thrown by an unidentified man into a house in Legarda, Manila, killed a 2-year-old girl and a housemaid yesterday night.

Neighbors told police that they heard an explosion at about 7:30 p.m. and saw a man running away from the house of the Gutierrez family in the slums just outside the compound of the Light Rail Transit 2 Legarda Station.

Inside the house, the girl who was not immediately identified and the Gutierrez maid, Jocelyn, were dead from shrapnel wounds.

Three adults and five children were rushed to the hospital after suffering wounds from the attack, according to Senior Insp. Rudy Moreno, deputy chief of the Western Police District mobile division.

Moreno said the attack took place during a heavy downpour and while the victims were watching television. He added that no motive could immediately be determined.

METROBRIEFS

DPWH acts on Camanava

THE DEPARTMENT of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) denied that it was not acting on the concerns raised against the design of the P3.4-billion Camanava flood control project. At the same time, officials contested claims that its design was faulty and dangerous. Engineer Carla Bartolo of the Camanava flood control project office said the DPWH already had plans to put sandbags and sheet pilings in areas of the polder dike where soil was crumbling. Responding to claims that the project design was flawed and defective, she said it was too early to judge the project when it is only 26-percent complete.

Leila B. Salaverria

Deadly argument

A SECURITY guard shot to death a seaman and hurt two others before dawn yesterday during an argument in front of a 7-Eleven store in La Loma, Quezon City. Police said Revan Orticio, 20, a security guard employed by Monitor Security Agency, got into a fight with two patrons of the 24-hour store he was manning at about 4 a.m. The argument led to a fistfight until Orticio took out his service firearm and repeatedly shot Jonas Sausa, 23, and his companion Benjie Marigmen, 21, police said. Jessica Macalindang, 14, a bystander, was hit by a stray bullet. *DJ Yap*

Roxas HS Batch '75

BATCH '75 of Manuel A. Roxas High School Quezon City is celebrating its 30th year on July 9 from 6 to 12 p.m. at the Camelot Hotel, Mother Ignacia Avenue in Quezon City. All members of the batch are requested to register with any of the following: Magdalena (Bebot) Malana at Champaca Street, Roxas District, Quezon City, or through 412-8764; or Vicky Villanueva-Dayao through 727-0427, 727-7448 or 0919-8815200.

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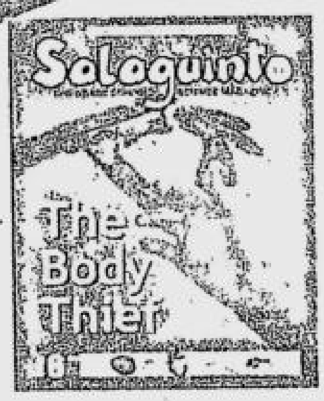

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SWEET SECOND TIME

Davadilla joins Tour greats' ranks

By Marc Anthony Reyes

VICTORY is sweeter the second time around for Colt 45 skipper Warren Davadilla (center) who became only the ninth rider to win the gruelling annual bikathon more than once. At yesterday's finish on Roxas Boulevard, Tourism's Edwin Paragoso (left) and Guerrero Brandy's Enrique Domingo raise the gallant champion's hands. RYAN LIM

THE WHEEL of fortune once again turned in favor of Warren Davadilla.

Only last month, Davadilla was ruing his luck after an accident left him with an injured wrist and damaged his bike. Worse, the jeepney driver who sideswiped him while he was training in Balagtas, Bulacan, refused to pay damages.

That incident was long gone in his mind when Davadilla yesterday stood on the stage across the famed Manila Baywalk to finally claim the Golden Tour 50@05 championship and secure his place among the country's biggest bikathon heroes.

The 30-year-old Davadilla, flashing the fitness and stamina last seen when he captured his first Tour title in 1998, finished the criterium 10th stage a fighting eighth.

With an overall clocking of 37 hours 20 minutes and 55 seconds for the 1,492-km race, the Colt 45 skipper finished with a lead of 6:41 over Frederick Feliciano of VAT Riders and 13:25 on last year's champion Rhyan Tanguilig of PLDT.

"*Nagtodo na rin ako* (I decided to take the final lap seriously)," said Davadilla, who wrested the yellow jersey of leadership after the second stage and ruled the individual time trial the next day.

A member of the national road race team to this year's Southeast Asian Games, the Airman second class won a third stage the other day while powering Colt 45 to the team championship worth P700,000.

On his own, Davadilla picked up P200,000 for the individual title, a Vellum bike and P57,000 more from his stage wins and for clinching the King of the Mountain title.

Arnold Marcelo of PLDT took the 10th and final stage honors, completing 50 laps around the Rizal Park route in 1:35:12, followed by 19-year-old Michael Ramos of VAT Riders and Davadilla's teammate Carlo Jasul.

While Davadilla said he relished this Tour title more because it's the latest, he noted that he could have won more stages had the event continued without a break.

"When I won in 1998 I thought that was my strongest years," said Davadilla, whose wife is heavy with their second child in Valenzuela City.

Davadilla nevertheless joined the ranks of Renato Dolosa, Carlo Guieb, Jose Sumalde, Jacinto Sicam, Maui Reynante, Jesus Garcia and Cornelio Padilla as the Tour's only two-time winners.

Antonio Arzala owns the most bikathon titles with three. *(Final results on A27)*

Given up by its major sponsor in the face of the global pressure on cigarette advertising, the Tour went into mothballs until Bert Lina, now the Customs chief, resurrected the bikathon in 2003 with Federal Express as its chief backer.

Tanduay bankrolled this year's event.

"*Nakuha ko lang sa ensayo* (My training paid off)," said Davadilla, who is looking forward to a successful campaign in the road race and criterium events of the SEAG.

Nilo Estayo of Touch Mobile won the Sprint King award worth P30,000, while Guerrero Brandy's Renato Sembrano took home the Rookie of the Year plum, also worth P30,000.

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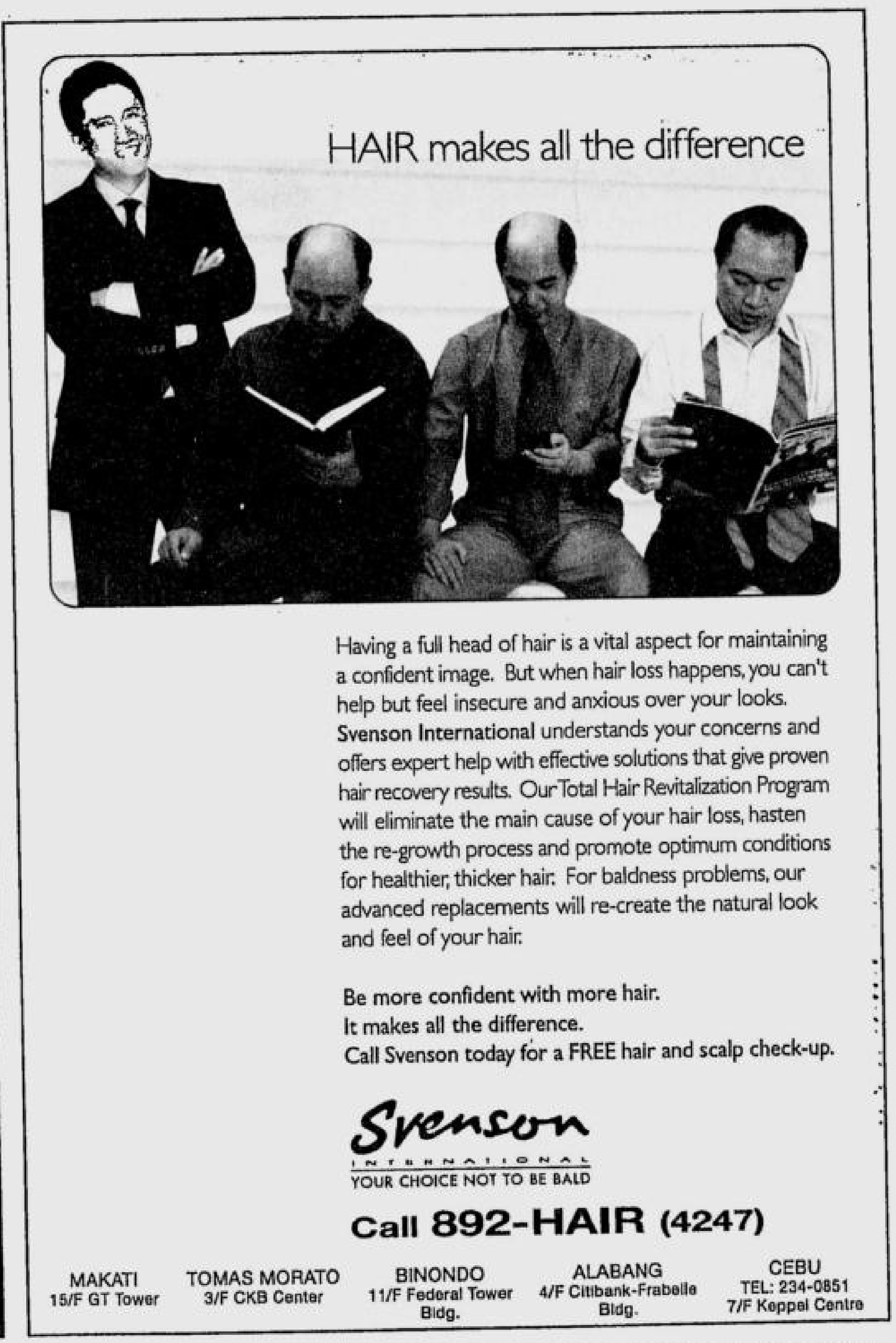
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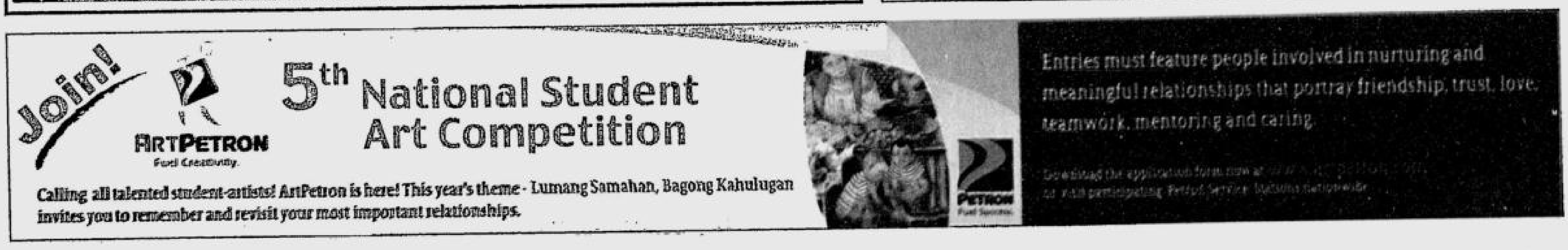
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RP cagers fifth in Champs Cup

THE PHILIPPINES finally came up with a decent finish after seven years in the Fiba-Asia Champions Cup after whipping Kuwait, 96-84, at the Araneta Coliseum last night.

Mark Caguioa pumped in 14 points while Jimmy Alapag and Rommel Adducul added 13 each as the RP-San Miguel five wrapped up their stint in the annual club tournament at fifth place.

It tied the accomplishment of the RP squad coached by Alfrancis Chua and represented by Tanduay players from the Philippine Basketball League in 1997, a year after RP-Hapee Toothpaste, reinforced by China's Ma Jian, captured the plum.

RP-Tanduay paraded two imports to strengthen a lineup that included Eric Menk and Mark Telan. Since then, the country had finished no higher than sixth, with the Nationals winding up seventh and 10th twice in the Fiba-organized event.

"We already topped that," said coach Chot Reyes after RP-SMC won four of its seven games in the weeklong tournament. "I cannot complain because we already beat the best finish so far by an all-Filipino team."

The Kuwaiti five, reinforced by two imports, was the fifth straight opponents of the Filipinos.

"It was no joke, no other team has done that," said Reyes. "This tournament is tremendously educational and informative. It was a good preparation and test for us."

The Nationals unloaded 20 points against Kuwait's seven bridging the third and final quarters that turned a tight 42-40 RP edge into a 62-49 bubble.

The Philippines shot 50 percent from three-point range with Renren Ritualo sinking three of five attempts, Dondon Hontiveros going two of five and Caguioa draining two of three.

Osamah Mubarak had 18 points while Chudney Grey and Yahee Albhar added 17 each for the Kuwaitis, who wound up sixth in the tourney.

Syria finished seventh after trouncing Kazakhstan, 77-71, in the other game.

The scores:

RP-SMC 96—Caguioa 14, Alapag 13, Adducul 13, Belasco 11, Hontiveros 9, Ritualo 9, Miller 8, Dela Cruz 7, Reavis 6, Villanueva 6, De Ocampo 0, Thoss 0.

KUWAIT 84—Mubarak 18, Albhar 17, Grey 17, Mutairi 13, Watkins 11, Shuaib 3, Alyahyuh 3, Alenezi 2, Boftein 0.

Quarters: 21-15, 42-40, 69-61, 96-84

Jewels ready to glow again

COMING into the game last Saturday, coach Robert Sison felt the Montaña Jewels would claim the first title berth in the PBL Unity Cup.

"If you look at the entire conference, we've never lost back-to-back," said Sison after Montaña wrapped up its semifinal series against Granny Goose, 56-54, in Game 3. "Every time we lose, we bounce back hard."

The Jewels, who are gunning for a second straight championship, had the chance to sweep the series after winning Game 1, 64-58. But the Kornets took Game 2, 65-61.

"Our Game 2 loss was a wake-up call for the team," said Sison.

The Jewels will know by tomorrow whether they'll be clashing against defending champion Magnolia Ice Cream, which has won seven of its last eight games, or the multi-titled Welcoat Paints, which gave the Jewels a tough time in last conference's championship run.

"It doesn't matter (which team we'll be facing)," noted Sison. "They're both strong teams."

Sison also acknowledged the two squads' Fil-Am threats. The versatile Kelly Williams, a shoo-in for the top rookie plum, pulled Magnolia out of its struggles late in the eliminations. The equally talented Anthony Washington, though inconsistent lately, could be unstoppable when in top form.

Jasmine W. Payo

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

Recah Trinidad is on leave. His column, Bare Eye, will be back next week.

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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Showbiz No. 1 (4:25PM)	Yu-Gi-Oh! (5:10PM)	Meteor Garden Full Edition (5:35PM)		TV Patrol World		Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit	Ikaw Ang Lahat Sa Akin	Memories Of Bali	Opids	Stained Glass	OK Fine! Whatever			Insider
ABC 5					Balas Barangay		TNA Impact		Sentro	Friends	The Apprentice		Fear Factor		Big News	Look Who's Talking		ESPN Golf	
GMA 7	Saang Sulok Ng Langit	Now and Forever	Glass Shoes	One Piece	Flame Of Recca	Full House		24 Oras		Darna		Encantadia	Extra Challenge		All About Eve	Lagot Ka, Isusumbong Kita			Saksi
RPN 9		Metro TV Shopping	Defenders Of The Earth	Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	The Insider	NBA On RPN					Biggest Loser		Newswatch Now	Sex & the City	Cerge For Truth	
IBC 13		Lifestyle		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Krusada Kontra Krimen		Home Shopping Network		Asian X-Tour					IBC News Tonite	Linawin Natin	
JackTV	Street Smarts	Worst Case Scenario		Wwe Heat		WWE Velocity		Cheat	Just For Laughs	Mad TV		Kid Notorious	Comedy Central Presents	Insomniac W/ Dave Attell	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Blue Collar TV	Banzai	Joe Schmo Show	
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Rugrats	The Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Yakkity Yak	Chalkzone	Rocket Power	Hey Arnold!	The Wild Thornberrys	The Angry Beavers	Rugrats
MYX		Urban MYX		Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	OPM MYX Countdown		My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		Complete Savages	Knock First	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Elimidate	Change of Heart	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	Friends	Will & Grace	The O.C.		Queer eye For The Straight Guy		Entertainment Tonight Weekend		Who Wants To Marry My Dad 2	
Studio 23		Urban MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Super Gals	My MYX	Ragnarok	Project Arms	Wazzup! Wazzup	Fightbox	Tru Calling		Charmed		News Central	The West Wing		Travel Time
AXN		The Contender				Hollywood's Greatest Stunts	E Buzz	The Associates		Boomtown		When Disasters Strike!		Fear Factor		CSI: Miami		CSI: Miami	
Star World	Weird TV	The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Buffy The Vampire Slayer		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	The King Of Queens	Still Standing	Grounded For Life/ Yes Dear	Frasier	Boston Public		Friends	The King Of Queens
CNN		Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Report	Business International		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	Living Golf	World News Asia		Your World Today	
National Geographic		Built For The Kill		Totally Wild	Wildlife Diary	Be The Creature		Egypt Detectives: Mystery Of The First Egyptians	Africa From The Ground Up	Wow		About Asia		National Geographic Specials/When Animals Attack		Built For The Kill		Totally Wild/Animals Like Us:Politics/Medicine/Adoption/Tool Use	Wildlife Diary
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Food 911	E! True Hollywood Story		NY Fashion Week	Life & Style		Brini Maxwell Show	Modern Girl's Guide	Breathing Room	Genuine Article
Star Movies		Far From Heaven (3:10PM)				Opening Night	Rocky IV			Dying Young (7:05PM)				When Harry Met Sally			Laws Of Attraction (10:40PM)		
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	The Woody Woodpecker Show	Ed, Edd N Eddy	Codename Kids Next Door	X-Men Evolution	Static Shock	Gundam Wing	Shaman King	The Looney Tunes Show		The Powerpuff Girls	Dexter's Laboratory	Time Squad	Thundercats	He-Man & The Masters Of The Universe	Gundam Seed
ESPN		World Tenpin Masters '05				NBA Anthology Down Low: Life in the D-League		NBA Anthology Down Low: Life in the D-League											
Disney Channel	Mr Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	The Sleepover Club	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	Buzz Lightyear Of Star Command	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr Bean: The Animated Series	House Of Mouse	Wonderful World Of Disney			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	America's Funniest Home Video	According To Jim	Wonderful World Of Disney	
Cinemax			I'll Be Seeing You (3:45PM)				Don King Only In America				Bullseye!			Deadly Voyage			Detonator		
Hallmark Channel	Who's The Boss	Wife Swap		HCA: The Fairytaler	Sesame Street		Mad About You	Who's The Boss	Bewitched				Wife Swap				Just Cause (10:35PM)		
Discovery Channel		American Chopper		Mummy Autopsy		Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery		Unsolved History				Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Civilizations	
MTV Philippines			Hangin Out at MTV		MTV Get Spotted		TRL		Ask Rob Thomas	MTV Divas		D-Hour	Talkdaters	Punk'D	Rich Girls	On Board at MTV	Brand New	VH1 Video Collection	
Sports Plus						Raceworld		This Is The PGA Tour		French Open Highlights		NCAA C'ship				Allianz C'ship Finals			

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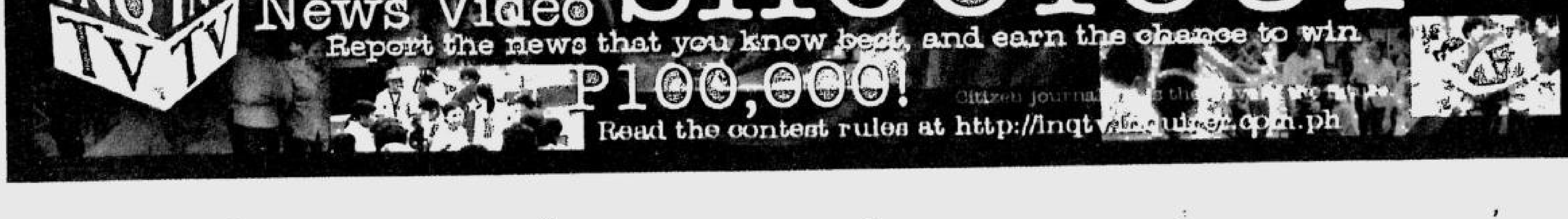
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Yang stuns Bata, averts all-RP semis

YANG Ching-shun of Chinese Taipei played the spoiler's role as he edged out hometown favorite Efren "Bata" Reyes of the Philippines, 9-8, to prevent an All-Filipino semifinal cast in the final leg of the San Miguel Asian 9-Ball Tour at the hot and humid Robinsons Galleria Trade Hall in Ortigas.

VALLE: Final 4

Playing with the air-conditioning out because of a power trip, Yang kept his cool as he stormed back from a 5-7 deficit to beat his Filipino rival and, in the process, clinch the overall Tour title.

The Taiwanese will have at least 200 Tour points after making it to the semifinals for the four straight time this year. Reyes, as a result of his quarterfinal loss, will only get 150 points while fellow Filipino Gandy Valle, who made it to the semifinals, can obtain at most 170 points if he wins the Manila leg.

"I feel great since I beat Reyes in front of his hometown fans, and I feel confident that I can win it all," said Yang.

Known as the "Son of Pool," Yang was battling Valle in the semifinals at presstime last night.

Valle survived 16-year-old Wu Chia-ching of Chinese Taipei, 9-8, taking advantage of four dry breaks by the teenager to steal the victory.

In the other side of the bracket, Antonio "Nikoy" Lining and Ronato Alcano arranged an All-Filipino semifinal battle.

Lining crushed Patrick Ooi of Malaysia, 9-4, while Alcano disposed off Chang Pei-wei, 9-6.

Alcano is in the semifinals here for the first time like Lining.

It was close through the first 10 racks in the Reyes-Yang duel. From 5-all, Reyes capitalized on a missed bid by Yang on the 1-ball in the 11th and cleaned up the next two racks.

But Reyes missed the 1-ball in the 14th rack and the Taiwanese then cleaned up the next two racks to be on the hill.

Yang, who topped the third leg in Kaohsiung last month, nearly paid for his crucial miscue in the 16th when he failed to pocket the 6-ball, allowing Reyes to knot it all up at 8. Feeling a sense of urgency, the 27-year-old Taiwanese had a perfect break in the 17th and eventually closed out the match.

Chao tops trickshot; Bustamante 2nd

TWO-TIME World Pool champion Chao Fong-pang of Chinese Taipei topped the inaugural Asian Trickshot Masters tournament at the Robinsons Galleria Trade Hall yesterday. Chao shot the cue ball into a line of three balls then made the cue ball go past the rack and make a rapid arc toward the corner pocket to convert the 9-ball for two points and a total winning score of eight points. He won $1,000 for his feat in the event organized by ESPN Star Sports. Francisco "Django" Bustamante ended up with six points, the same score of Yang Ching-shun of Chinese Taipei. Efren "Bata" Reyes settled for fourth place. The three earned $300 each.

Puyat scion keeps Jakarta title with last-hole birdie

MARCEL Puyat canned a 25-foot birdie putt on the last hole to pull off a dramatic victory for the Philippines in the boys' 11-12 category of the Jakarta Asean Plus Junior golf championship at the Damai Indah Golf & Country Club in Indonesia, recently.

The 12-year-old Marcel, a sixth grader at Ateneo, clinched the title—his second straight in the class—on the par-5 18th hole, capping a relentless back-nine rally to win by one stroke over Nicolas Smits of Indonesia.

Puyat, a scion of the Puyat clan, struggled with a 79 and 77 in the first two rounds but came through with his best round of 74 on nines of 39-35 from the 6,400-yard men's white tees.

It was the second major victory for Philippine jungolf this season after Miguel Tabuena prevailed in Thailand. The Jakarta tournament was participated in by kids from Taiwan, Korea, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Australia, India and Malaysia.

The Philippines' girls entries also figured well with Linnel de Villa, fourth in Class A play, teaming up with Paulina Sotto to bag second place behind Thailand in girls' team play.

Debbie de Villa and Mia Piccio finished third and fifth, respectively, in the girls' Class B.

Meanwhile, Dottie Ardina placed second in girls' Class C in the Asia-Pacific championships in South Korea, with Wolen Superal finishing third in boys' Class C and Bino dela Paz fourth in Class D.

Golden Tour triumph of the Filipino spirit

TEN stages, close to 1,500 kilometers with little time to prepare in these hard times, the just-concluded Tanduay presents... Golden Tour 50@'05 was a triumph of the Filipino spirit more than anything else.

Warren Davadilla won his second title and the Colt 45 riders pedaled away with the team plum, but everyone in the field wound up as winners in the golden edition of the summer spectacle on wheels.

Tanduay agreed to bankroll the event on such short notice, re-affirming the company's support to sports development.

"Sports have always had a soft spot in the heart of Dr. (Lucio) Tan," said Tanduay marketing manager Larry Li, caretaker of the second of two Tan teams in the Tour—the Guerrero Brandy Road Warriors.

Final standings

STAGE RESULTS

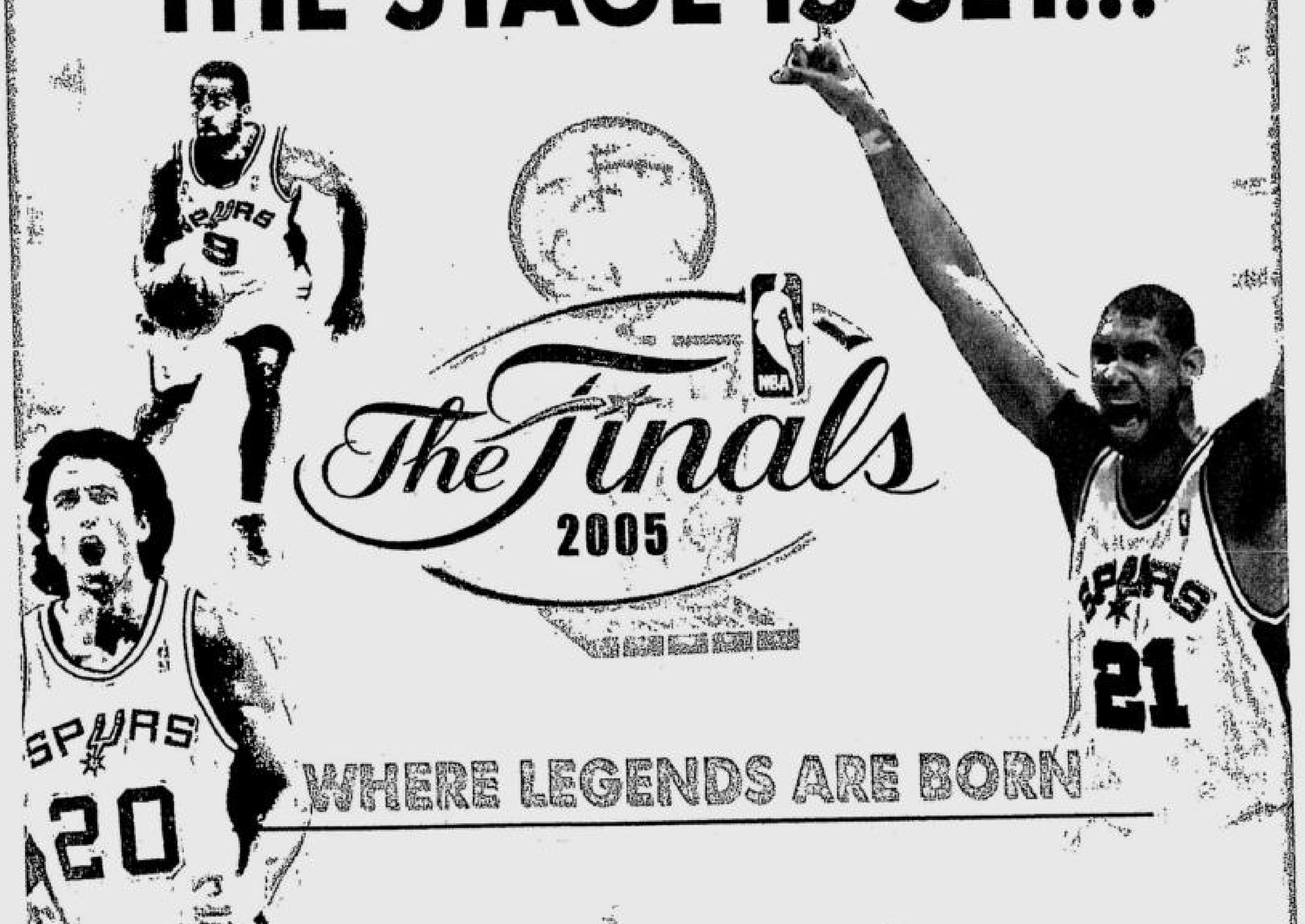
1. A Marcelo, PLDT, 1 hour, 35 mins, 12 secs
2. M. Ramos, VAT Riders, same
3. C Jasul, Colt 45, same
4. R. Hualda, Tourism, same
5. M Mendoza, Touch Mobile, same
6. A. Benosa, Touch Mobile, same
7. J. Paras, Go 21, 44 seconds behind
8. W. Davadilla, Colt 45, 52 seconds
9. E. Paragoso, Tourism, same
10. E. Domingo, Guerrero Brandy, same
11. E. Obosa, Go 21, same
12. B. Ravina, Go 21, same
13. V. Quinta Jr., Metro Drug, same
14. E. Atilano, Metro Drug, 2:07 mins
15. E. Feliciano, VAT Riders, same
16. A. Asuncion, Tourism, same
17. R. Tanguilig, PLDT, 2:20 mins.
18. A. Quirimit, Tourism, and 59 others, same

OVERALL INDIVIDUAL

1. W. Davadilla, Colt 45, 37 hours, 20 mins, 55 secs
2. E. Feliciano, VAT Riders, 6 mins, 41 secs behind
3. R. Tanguilig, PLDT, 13:25 mins
4. L. Atilano, Metro Drug, 16:18 mins
5. S. Diamsay, Tourism, 18.49 mins
6. J. Dasalla, Colt 45, 21:04 mins
7. D. Ganigan, Guerrero Brandy, 24:02 mins
8. A. Quirimit, Tourism, 24.27 mins
9. A. Benosa, Touch Mobile, 26:56 mins
10. D. Marafia, Colt 45, 29.06 mins
11. R. Navarro, Custom, 29:56 mins
12. B. Ravina, Go 21, 30:20 mins
13. F. Alagano, Metro Drug, 32:49 mins
14. M. Primero, Custom, 33:18 mins
15. E. Quinones, Custom, 38:03 mins
16. M. Reyes, Colt 45, 37:46 mins
17. S. Barnachea, Touch Mobile, 38:02 mins
18. R. Sambrano, Guerrero Brandy, 38:51 mins
19. M. McQuin Alconar, VAT Riders, 39:17 mins
20. V. Muena, Guerrero Brandy, 39:44 mins
21. D. Hardin, Custom, 41:12 mins
22. G. Gines, Custom, 41:51 mins
23. O. Villanueva, VAT Riders, 42:08 mins
24. B. Lopez Jr., Metro Drug, 42:10 mins
25. R. Hualda, Tourism, 44.57 mins

OVERALL TEAM

1. Colt 45, 139 hours, 36 mins 41.932 secs
2. Tourism, 30 mins, 48.778 secs behind
3. Metro Drug, 33.50.431 mins
4. VAT Riders, 47.33.849 mins
5. Guerrero Brandy, 53.18.874 mins
6. Custom, 54.39.108 mins
7. Go 21, 1:05.17.333 hrs
8. Touch Mobile, 1:23.26.472 hrs
9. PLDT, 1:31.12.686 hrs.



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Pistons live another day

Force Game 7 with 91-66 rout of Wade-less Heat

DETROIT Pistons forward Rasheed Wallace, who predicted a Pistons win in Game 7, contributes his share to the cause with a slam in Game 6. REUTERS

DETROIT, Michigan—A desperate and defensive-minded Detroit took advantage of an injury to Miami's Dwyane Wade, pounding the Heat, 91-66, to force game seven of their National Basketball Association semifinal series.

"I've been doing this a long time and you don't get into too many final situations like this," said Detroit coach Larry Brown. "I hope my players enjoy this. The thing I dread about a game seven is for players to worry about losing or fear of making a mistake."

Wade could only sit and watch on Saturday, the result of a strained rib muscle. Playing without Wade, Miami was run off the court by the Pistons who ousted Indiana to reach the Eastern Conference final.

Wade had averaged 30 points through the first four games before suffering the injury in the third quarter of Miami's game five win.

He tried to work through it but could not and left for good in the fourth quarter.

Wade did not practice Friday but intended to play, going through pregame workouts with Heat assistant Erik Spoelstra while wearing a gel-filled protective wrap.

But he apparently felt too much pain and changed back into street clothes, watching from the bench as Miami's offence ground to a halt without him.

"After the first quarter they dominated us," Heat coach Stan Van Gundy said. "I am not going to get into excuses.

"We have to find some answers to their pressure and keep them off the glass. Those are the two major things that will determine our success on Monday night.

"You play all year to have game seven on your floor. Game sevens are great. Something you dream of playing when you are a kid."

Matched up with a desperate, defensive-minded Detroit, Miami was held under 80 points for just the third time this season—all against the Pistons.

The Heat's total was a franchise low for a playoff game, which includes all those 1990s scrums against the New York Knicks.

Without Wade, the Heat had no one to start their offence and no one to bail them out. In the first half, Miami had 14 baskets and 12 turnovers, digging itself a 44-32 hole.

It was even worse in the third quarter, which Detroit closed with a 9-0 burst for a 69-45 bulge.

The top-seeded Heat tried to force-feed superstar center Shaquille O'Neal, who has been nursing a bruised thigh throughout the postseason.

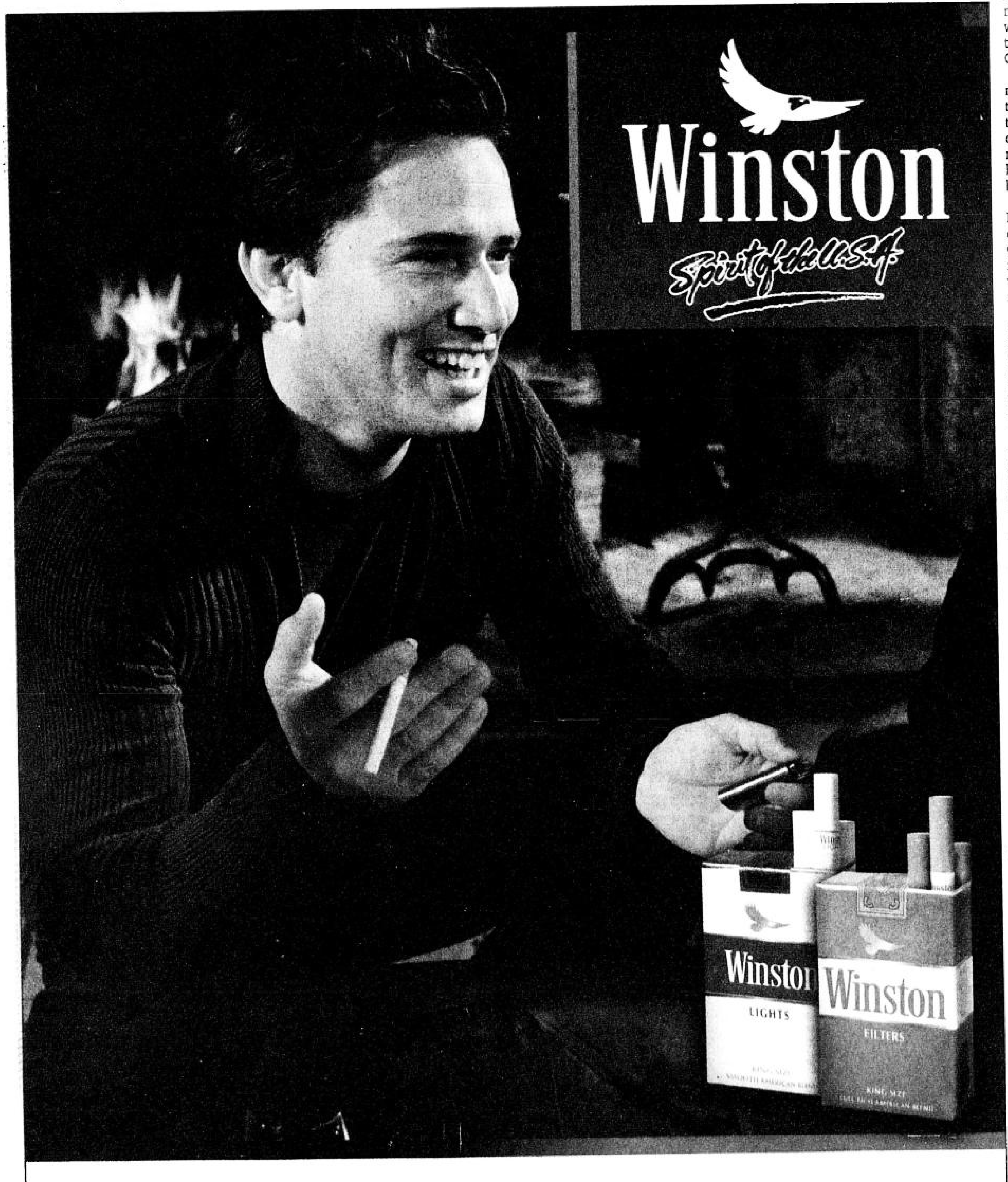
O'Neal had his best statistical game of the series with 24 points and 13 rebounds but also committed six turnovers—as many as the Pistons.

"We got to be able to handle their pressure and we didn't do that tonight," O'Neal said. "We wanted to make a run at the end. In fourth quarter we made too many mistakes."

The injuries continued to pile up as well. Swingman Eddie Jones, already playing with a bruised foot, suffered a cut over his right eye in the third quarter that required stitches to close.

Richard Hamilton scored 24 points for the second-seeded Pistons, who will try for a rare game seven road win Monday. It has happened just 16 times in NBA history.

"Nothing motivates you more than knowing this could be your last game of the season," Pistons Ben Wallace said. *AFP*



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JUSTINE Henin-Hardenne exults after winning her

FRENCH OPEN

Henin-Hard
Pierce quic

PARIS—Grand Slam, indeed!

Justine Henin-Hardenne slammed Mary Pierce grandly in the French Open final on Saturday, reducing the Frenchwoman to tears and an apology to fans after the most lopsided title match at Roland Garros in 17 years.

Henin-Hardenne couldn't have played much better, or Pierce much worse, than they did in a 6-1, 6-1 drubbing that gave the Belgian her second French championship and fourth major trophy just months after she returned to tennis from a long layoff caused by an energy-draining blood virus and a knee injury.

"It's a lot of emotion for me," a smiling Henin-Hardenne said in French as she accepted the same ornate Suzanne Lenglen Cup she won in 2003, along with a check for just over $1 million. "I lived through very difficult moments last year. This fills me with happiness."

Bedridden at times during her seven-month absence from the game until starting her comeback in March, and bothered by a back injury the past two weeks, Henin-Hardenne looked the picture of health in a masterful performance on a breezy, occasionally drizzly afternoon at Roland Garros.

"I probably enjoy my game more than before my illness," said Henin-Hardenne, who turned 23 three days earlier. "I enjoy every moment I'm on the court. Every ball I hit, it's with my heart."

She glided with ease on the red clay and did anything she wanted to do—clipping lines and hammerin leys whil outclassed

"Excuse right now," told the one-sided beat Natas "I'm sad be a better m very long."

When s she said n nerves go lack of ten final 11 ye

"You ha tion to be today's m said, addi had troub fore big m I was too c aggressive.

Henin-H final triun longer—a low Belgi was last ye a match, A na beatin tieva, 6-1, years ru French w nals hav blowouts.

RP women gai

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Host Philippines earned a championship slot when its women's team advanced in the doubles event Saturday night of the International Invitational Sepak Takraw Championship 2nd Edward S. Hagedorn Cup at the Puerto Princesa Coliseum here.

After Team Pl Autor, Elizabe semifin Philipp The M

Letran all se

THE NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) basketball tournament, once upon a golden time the No. 1 and most glamorous league in the country, marks its 81st season on Saturday, June 25, at the Araneta Coliseum with Letran College as host.

Featuring the traditional opening-day *palabas* and the popular cheerleading numbers, a banner crowd is expected to attend this year's inaugural ceremonies even though it has been affected by the departure of La Salle and Ateneo which joined the rival University Athletic Association of the Philippines in the 1980s.

As host of the 81st NCAA season, Letran will be holding kick-off activities on Wednesday, June 15, at its gym in Intramuros. This preliminary event, according to Letran athletics moderator Rev. Fr. Victor Calvo, aims to bring together the various school heads, the league's management committee, the coaches, players, team managers and the media to enable them to meet socially and get better acquainted.

Another highlight will be the mandatory drug testing of the players and their meeting with much-respected Commissioner Joe Lipa.

Competing in this season's NCAA cage wars are the Philippine Christian University, which won the crown in its first try last year, San Sebastian College, San Beda College, Jose Rizal University, Perpetual Help College (Rizal), Mapua Tech, College of St. Benilde and host Letran.

While it is true that the NCAA has lost its once popular appeal, it consoles itself by the fact that it has been a rich source of sporting heroes.

The NCAA was founded in 1924 by the late Dr. Regino Ylanan, a pillar of sports both as an out-

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Man the NCA San Bed greatest called "I impendi roaring onships ed Zam player, L er and c four str 1962. In on RP 1960 achieve that pla onship

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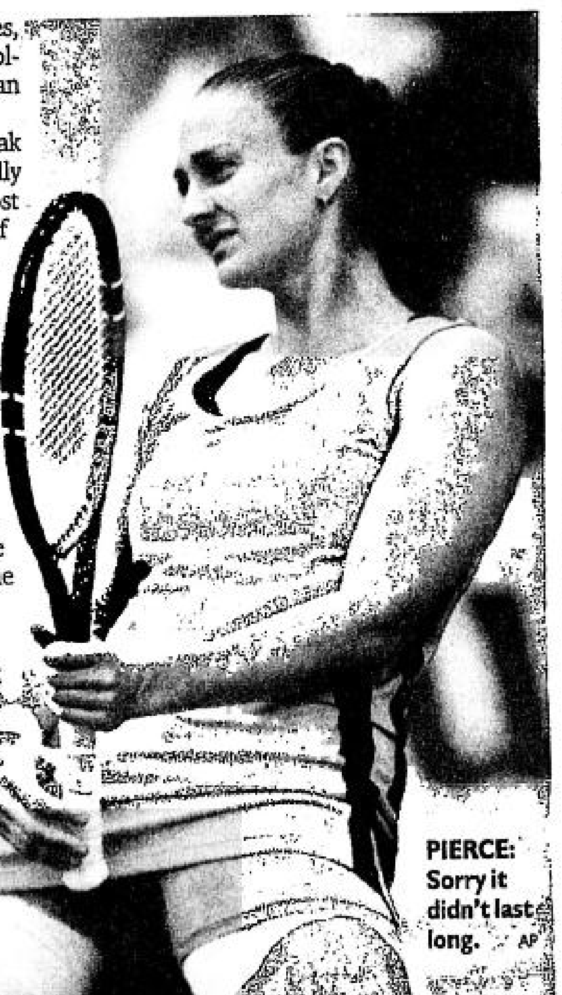
vomen's final match against Mary Pierce. REUTERS

tenne finishes off kly, claims crown



PIERCE: Sorry it didn't last long. AP

comers with groundstrokes, overheads, dropping vol- getting plenty of help from an Pierce, the 2000 champion.

me: It's very difficult to speak the 30-year-old Pierce tearfully owd in French after the most French final since Steffi Graf na Zvereva, 6-0, 6-0, in 1988. cause I lost. I wanted to play atch. I'm sorry it didn't last g no!

he gathered her emotions, ither patriotic pressure nor to her, but rather an odd ion before her third French rs after her first.

e to have some kind of emo- up for the match, and before tch I was really calm," she g that she sometimes has breathing or eating be- tches in the past. "Maybe lm. I needed to be more

ardenne's first French iph didn't last much 6-0, 6-4 romp past fel- Kim Clijsters. Nor ar's final much of nastasia Myski- Elena Demen- 6-2. For three ning, the men's fi- been *AFP*

n sepak takraw final

drawing a bye in the first round, ilippines-B, composed of Deseree den Bernardo and reserve Karah h Festin, made it to the crossover l phase where they beat Team es-A, 21-13, 18-21, 15-8.

anila-based bets will face Southeast Asian Games silver medalist Vietnam in the finals today. The Vietnamese reached the finals by hammering South Korea, 21-7, 21-11.

Gelyn Evora and Irene Apdon, the nationals from Puerto Princesa, will slug it out with the Koreans for the bronze medal.

t for 81st NCAA season

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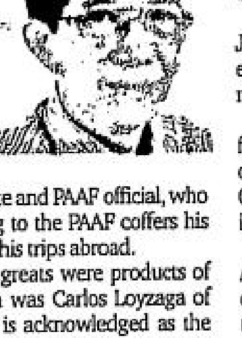

ecathlon athlete and PAAF official, who n for returning to the PAAF coffers his wance during his trips abroad.

Filipino sports greats were products of . One of them was Carlos Loyzaga of College, who is acknowledged as the ver Filipino basketball player. Aptly e Big Difference" because he could turn defeat into victory, Loyzaga led the d Lions to successive NCAA champi- t allowed San Beda to retire the covet- a Trophy in the 1950s. An all-around yzaga was a topnotch shooter, rebound- nter who towed the Philippine team to ht Asian Games titles from 1951 to he ABC, Loyzaga skippered the champi- on in the inaugural meet in Manila in in Taipei in 1963. But his greatest ent was playing for the Philippine team d third in the World Basketball Champi- Rio de Janeiro in 1954.

e Simeon Toribio of Mapua Tech, was oduct of the NCAA. The greatest high his era, Toribio narrowly missed win- d place in the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics, but bounced back in the 1932 Los Angeles Games to win the bronze medal, becoming in the process the first Filipino to bag a medal in Olympic track and field competition.

The Padilla brothers of Letran College—Jose Jr. and Carlos, father of international boxing referee Sonny Padilla—also gave stirring performances in the 1932 Olympics in boxing.

In basketball, without question the Filipinos' favorite sport, the Philippines, composed mostly of NCAA players, finished fifth at the 1936 Berlin Olympics when the dash-and-dribble sport made its debut.

In the national team were Hall of Famers Sen. Ambrosio Padilla of Ateneo and UP, Charlie Borck of San Beda, Jacinto Ciria Cruz of UST and Primitivo Martinez of Ateneo and UST, Jesus Marzan of San Beda, Amador Obordo of Ateneo and Bibiano Quano of Letran and Ateneo.

Of course, Letran's famous Murder Inc. basketball team also shared in the spotlight. The NCAA champion team of 1950, Murder Inc. was led by team captain Lauro Mumar, Dr. Herminio Astorga, Nilo Verona, Ricardo Panis, Jose Maria Iglesias and former Manila International Airport manager Luis Tabuena. The other members were Adriano Barata, Cristino Cui, Juan del Castillo, Jose Gutierrez, Narciso Manalac, Cesar Seguerra, Melquiades Manicsic, Senen Obiadas, Leodegario Pilones and Antonio Vidal. Their coach was Angel de Leon, who was a member of the school's first NCAA senior champion in 1938.

Mumar also played in the 1948 London Olympics together with fellow Letranite Fely Fajardo, Ding Fulgencio of Jose Rizal and La Salle's Manolet Araneta, Eddie Decena and Ramoncito Campos.

Memorial golf shoot-out looms

DUBLIN, Ohio—David Toms aced the fourth hole and shot 8-under 64 to wind up in a four-way tie for the lead with Fred Couples, Jeff Sluman and Bart Bryant at the Memorial on a Saturday of low scoring.

Ten others were within four shots of the lead—including Tiger Woods, one of the few players stuck in neutral—setting up what should be a shoot-out on Sunday at Muirfield Village.

"You've got to shoot what everyone else is shooting," Couples said after a 66 that put him in the final group for the second straight year. "I have just as good a chance as eight or 10 guys."

Bryant recovered from a double bogey at No. 2 when he hit his approach into the creek, making five birdies on the back nine, including a 9-iron that stopped just inches behind the cup at the difficult 17th. He had a 66 and joined the other leaders at 12-under 204.

Sluman, who started the day with a one-shot lead, had a chance to finish it that way until a 40-foot birdie putt that he ran up over the fringe slid just below the cup.

The third round usually sorts out the leaderboard. All this did was rearrange the names.

Jonathan Kaye was among the leaders until he found a fairway bunker on the 18th and made bogey for a 68, leaving him one shot behind along with Woody Austin (65), who also bogeyed the last hole.

Woods made three bogeys in his round of 71 and was at 8-under 208.

"I put myself in position today, and that's all I did," Toms said. "I'm not going to be able to make pars and hope it's good enough."

Toms has karma on his side. Four years ago at the US PGA Championship, he made a hole-in-one in the third round that looked as if it would hit hard and go over the green, only to crash into the pin and disappear. He went on to win his only major by one shot.

Couples is a surprising contender, despite having won the Memorial in 1998 and contending last year. He hasn't played since the Masters because of a troubled back, but began wearing a brace that fits like a body suit from about 8 inches (20 centimeters) above his knees extending to his lower back. *AP*

Hatton takes belt as Tszyu retires

MANCHESTER, England—Ricky Hatton won the IBF light-welterweight title when defending champion Kostya Tszyu retired on his stool before the final round early Sunday.

The unbeaten British challenger, who also holds the lightly regarded WBU title, appeared to be well ahead on points against the veteran Russian-born Australian, who staggered back to his corner at the end of the 11th and then signaled he couldn't carry on.

It was Hatton's 39th victory in as many fights but easily the best of his career. Fighting before a sellout 22,000 crowd in his home city in the early hours of Sunday local time, he had never fought a fighter of Tszyu's class.

But he fought the champion toe to toe in a thrilling contest at MEN Arena and, although Tszyu appeared to be getting on top from the seventh round, Hatton came back strongly to take control.

For 35-year-old Tszyu, it was his second loss against 31 victories, and might have ended dreams of a contest with the likes of Oscar De La Hoya.

With the crowd roaring on the British fighter, the two fighters went at each other from the first bell, each of them trying to dominate inside.

Hatton pinned Tszyu on the ropes, landing uppercuts to the head and also his trademark body punches in round two. But the champion landed a solid left hook two minutes into the fourth round to try and halt Hatton's charge.

Tszyu also landed his fearsome right hand in the middle of round five but Hatton kept moving forward.

Hatton appeared to have Tszyu rocking on the ropes with a combination early in round six, but the champion came back with more right hands with no sign of either fighter slowing the fast tempo.

Hatton sank to one knee after a low blow in the seventh and it wasn't counted as a knockdown. But Tszyu, swelling below his left eye, staggered Hatton with a right just before the bell.

Tszyu was warned for low blows and Hatton, almost in retaliation, landed a low left which had the champion down on one knee. Referee Dave Parris halted the action for the champion to get a breather. *AP*

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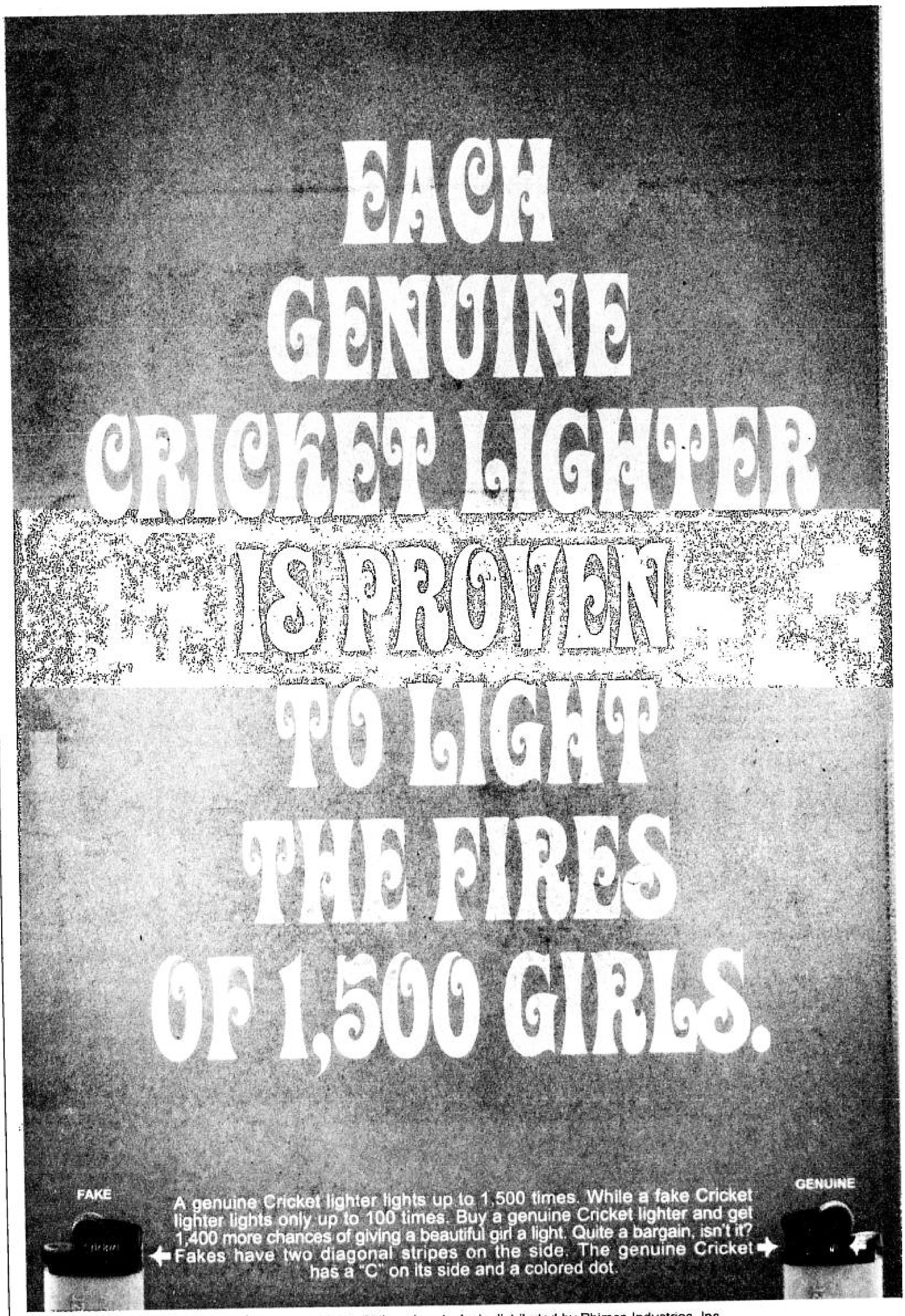
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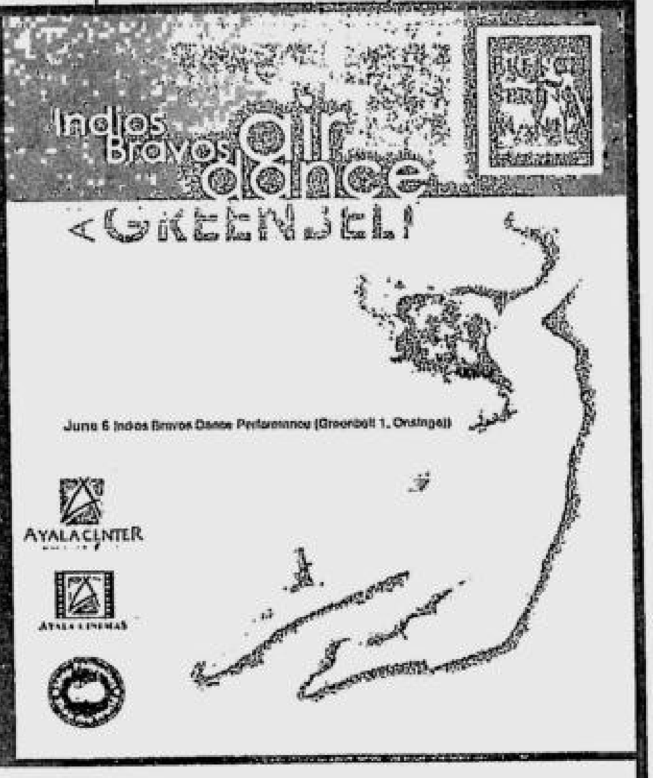

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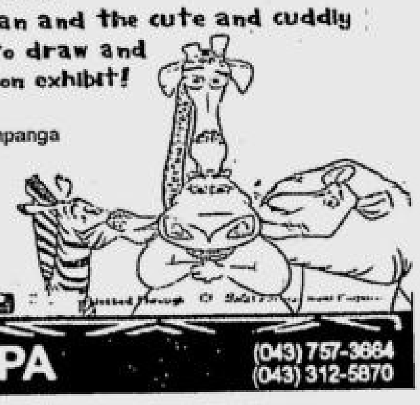

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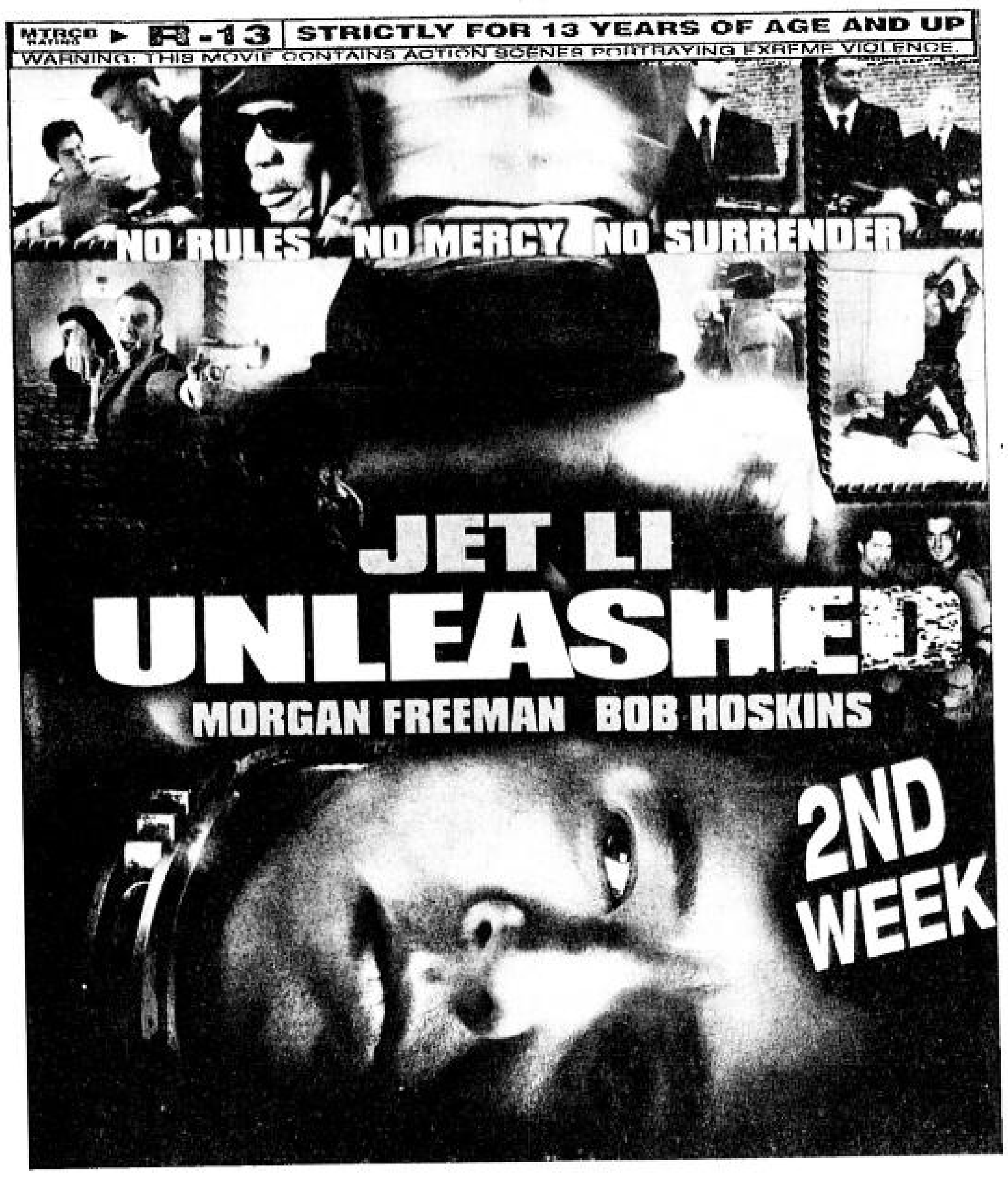
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SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME
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STAR WARS - EPISODE III
12:30 / 1:10 / 3:30 / 4:10 / 6:30/ 7:10 / 9:30 / 10:10
COACH CARTER
12:30 / 3:20 / 6:10 / 9:00
SHUTTER
12:40 / 2:50 / 5:00 / 7:10 / 9:20
GLOBE PLATINUM CINEMA P 249 / P299
STAR WARS - EPISODE III

3RD INTERNATIONAL PINK FILM FESTIVAL: June 3 - 12, 2005
6:00pm PANEL W/ OSCAR 6:30pm EURO PINK 9:00pm CHUCK & BUCK / DUDA

ALI MALL CINEMAS

❶ SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME
11:00 / 1:20 / 3:40 / 6:00 / 8.20
❷ SIN CITY
12:00 / 2:45 / 5:30 / 8:15
❸ UNLEASHED
11·25 / 1·35 / 3·45 / 5·55 / 8·05
❹ LA VISA LOCA
11:15 / 1:30 / 3:45 / 6:00 / 8:15
❺ SHUTTER
11:35 / 1:45 / 3:55 / 6:05 / 8:15

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June 10, Fri. 2005 PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE
4:45pm Sta Lucia vs. Shell 7:30pm Coca Cola vs Winner of Alaska -SMB
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CINEMA 5 — **A LOT LIKE LOVE** PG13
12:10 , 2:45 , 5:15 , 7:45 , 10:15

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SPORTS

Alcantara leads march of victors

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Francis Casey Alcantara whitewashed Algen Olivar, 6-0, 6-0, in the boys' 16-under and Mike Maghinay, 6-0, 6-0, in the junior men's (21-under) play at the start of the adidas Tennis Challenge 2005 at the Nazareth Tennis Club here. Alcantara, who captured three titles in Malaysia last year as part of the Milo-RP team, advanced to the next round along with Paul Saladaga, who downed Robert Malalis, 6-2, 6-0; Gabriel Reyes who routed Elson Solon, 6-0, 6-2; and Kent Tac-an, who edged Princeton Gerapusco, 7-5, 6-4. In the boys' 12-under play of the adidas tourney backed by Milo, Snickers and Globe Gentext, Juan Fermin routed John Bernus, 6-0, 6-1; Marco Araneta nipped Rajrey Batao, 7-6, 5-7, 7-6; and John Go blanked Kim Agbon, 6-0, 6-0.

Empire King strikes again

By Edwin Villanueva, *Contributor*

IT SEEMS Empire King has found the ideal partner in veteran rider Antonio Alcasid Jr.

Only a week after Alcasid had a rousing debut handling his reins, Empire King gave the new tandem a second straight victory, this time in the Mayor Jejomar Binay Cup at the Santa Ana Park.

The 2004 Horse of the Year found the going smoothly in dismantling his four rivals over the 1,500-meter race because there was no Cover Girl to give him a tough time, just like when he prevailed in the Marho Founders' Cup the last time out.

So sharp was Empire King under Alcasid's driving that the chestnut colt stopped the clock at 1:31.6, submitting dizzying splits of 18-23.5-23.5-26.5. That feat wiped out Real Top's previous record clocking of 1:31.8.

"*Talagang napupunto siya* (He's really in peak form)," Alcasid said. "*Sana laging ganito ang takbo niya* (I hope he runs this well every time)."

Empire King came home four lengths clear of Sound Offer to pocket the P300,000 first prize in the race held in honor of the Makati mayor.

It was the 11th victory in 14 runs by Empire King at the Makati race venue. Overall, the son of Perfect Halo, now campaigning as a 4-year-old, totes a record of 16 wins in 26 runs.

•Alcasid gave Empire King a clean break off the gates then wisely gave way to Sound Offer and Queen Bearheart, who wore each other out in dueling for the lead.

The outstanding favorite with sales of P1,203,163 out of P1,467,577 had no trouble passing Sound Offer at the far turn, but Alcasid applied the whip five times down the stretch to ensure the victory.

Sound Offer eventually finished second, followed by Desirable. West Bound, Cover Girl's stablemate tipped to crowd Empire King yesterday, was never in the hunt and arrived fourth, while Queen Bearheart landed fifth and last.

Binay was joined at the awards rites by Philracom chair Jimmy Dilag.

SHAKEY'S V-LEAGUE

Lady Archers eye No. 7 vs Ateneans

LA SALLE'S tough defense will be put to the test again against Ateneo. PDI PHOTO

LA SALLE guns for its seventh straight win when it tangles with arch-rival Ateneo today in the Shakey's V-League at the Rizal Coliseum.

The defending champion Lady Archers, bidding for a two-round semifinal sweep, are strong favorites in the 5 p.m. match.

With Maureen Penetrante and Michelle Carolino leading the attack, La Salle posted a 25-18, 25-21, 25-17 victory over Lyceum Monday.

Ateneo hopes to bounce back from a five-set loss to Santo Tomas, 22-25, 25-21, 25-23, 18-25, 15-6, Saturday.

The Lady Eagles will bank on veteran Michelle Laborte, Cecile Tabuena and Amelia Guanco in a bid to break their tie for third with the UST Tigresses at 4-3.

Lyceum, still winless in the fledgling conference, seeks an upset against San Sebastian in the game at 3:30 p.m.

The Lady Stags shoot for win No. 6 to maintain a solid grip on second spot in the event backed by Accel, Mikasa, IBC 13 and Jemah Television.

The winless Lyceum, haunted by the absence of ace spiker Angelica Bigcas, hopes to snap out of a six-match losing spell.

Karla Tricia V. Magno

US cockers vying in big Pasay derby

WELL-KNOWN cockers and gamefowl breeders from the United States will field eight entries during the Super 4-cock Derby at the Pasay City Cockpit starting Friday. It is the first time American cockers will compete in the Pasay arena, according to pit manager Eric dela Rosa. Father-and-son Jet and Joel Fernando of Pampanga are hosting the event, sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000, which will see the participation of champion US breeder Billy Johnson. Also part of the US contingent are Paul Fassot and Daniel Lim of California, as well as World Slasher Cup veterans Rene Medina and Ric de Guzman. The locals will be bannered by Batangas breeder Dicky Lim, who recently ruled the first and second editions of 330 K Big Event 6-Cock Derby at the Las Piñas Coliseum. Lim will again field his ferocious Lemon Roundheads under entry names RQP San Juan Coliseum and Golden Circle. Also fielding their ace gamebirds are Rep. Gerry "Boy" Espina, Patrick Antonio, Rudy Albano, Gov. Ito Yñares, Benjie Lim, Pol Estrellado, Blandy Tolentino, Mayor Lazatin, Jun and Rudy Jingco and the Madlambayan brothers, among others. For inquiries, call 843-1890, 843-1746 or 816-6750.

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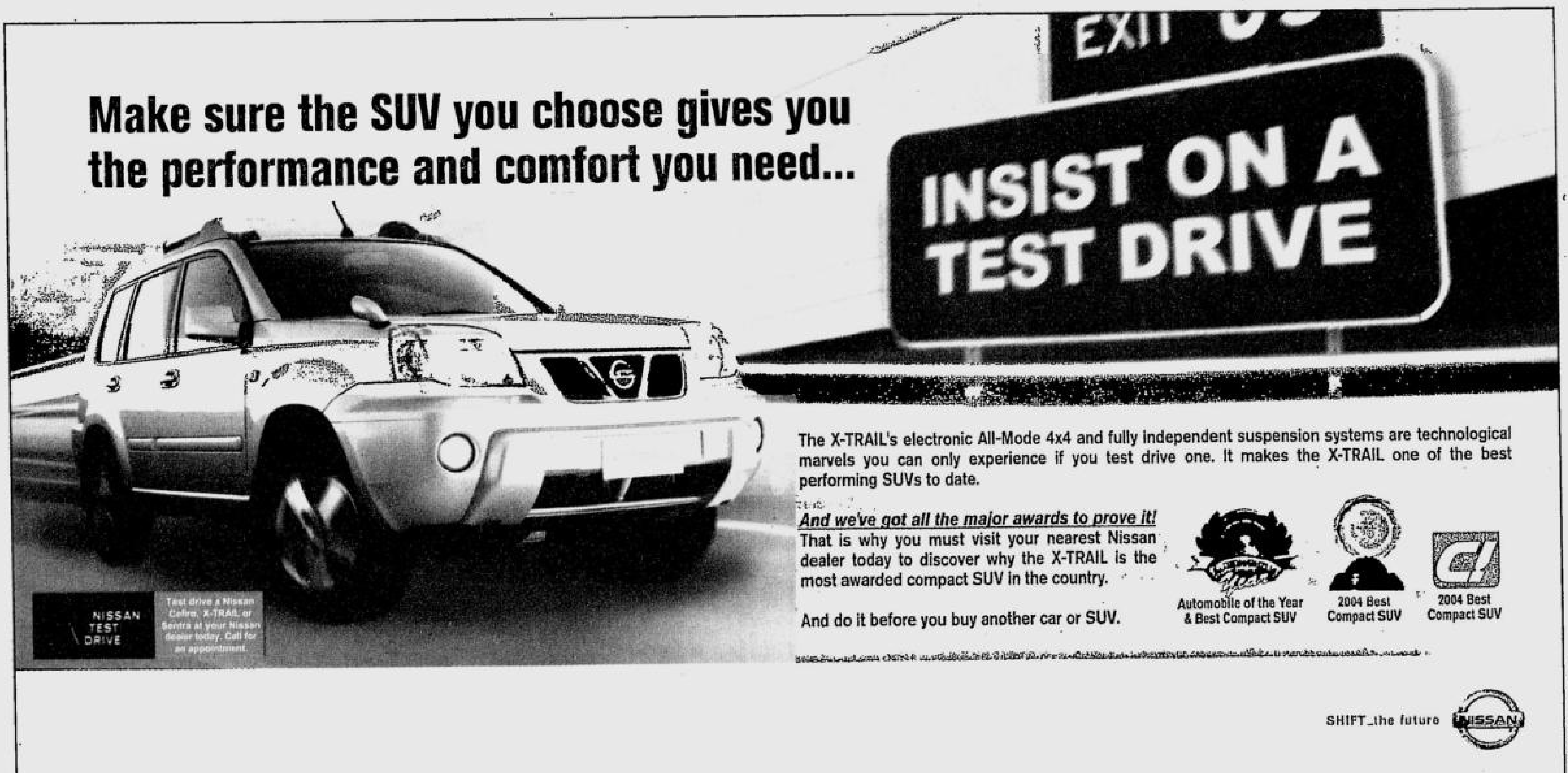
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Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

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Nancy Castiglione, *tsinelas* lady

Find out why she is kissing this bottle

STORY ON PAGE A2-2

'Sakada' debuts on ABC

ACTIVIST-STAGE director Behn Cervantes' incendiary film "Sakada" premiers on Philippine TV on "ABCinema," June 26, at 10 p.m.

The controversial movie was pulled out of theaters and seized by the military on orders of the Marcos dictatorship when it was first shown in 1976.

The story of two clans (landowners and migrant farm workers) at the height of agrarian unrest, Cervantes' directorial debut topbilled young talents Hilda Koronel, Bembol Roco and Joseph Sytangco, alongside veteran players Rosa Rosal, Pancho Magalona, Robert Arevalo, Alicia Alonzo, and Gloria Romero.

ABCinema earlier showcased Chen Kaige's "Farewell My Concubine" and other Asian film classics.

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Pinoy-Aussie in CBS' rock star search finals

By Ruben V. Nepales
LA Correspondent

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

LOS ANGELES—Miguel "Mig" Ayesa, a singer-actor-musician born in the Philippines, is one of 15 finalists competing in "Rock Star: INXS," a worldwide search created by "Survivor" and "The Apprentice" producer Mark Burnett.

The "American Idol"-like competition launched in search of a new lead singer for the Australian band INXS premieres July 11 on CBS.

INQUIRER Entertainment learned about Ayesa's inclusion in the contest from Zen Lopez, the first Filipino-American to be appointed Arts and Culture Commissioner of Glendale, California. Lopez shared an e-mail sent to her by Australia-based artist-writer Alfredo "Ding" Roces.

Roces' e-mail carried a news story by AAP (Australian Associated Press) about Ayesa making it as one of the finalists after intensive auditions in 20 cities spread over six continents. He wrote Lopez: "Miguel Ayesa in this [AAP] story is the son of my niece, Carmen (Uko) Legarda Ayesa. His grandfather (Dr. Alejandro Legarda) is a first cousin and his great grandmother (Filomena Roces) was my father's sister. We would chance upon him with his mother when he lived in Sydney before he moved to London last year to pursue his career on stage there."

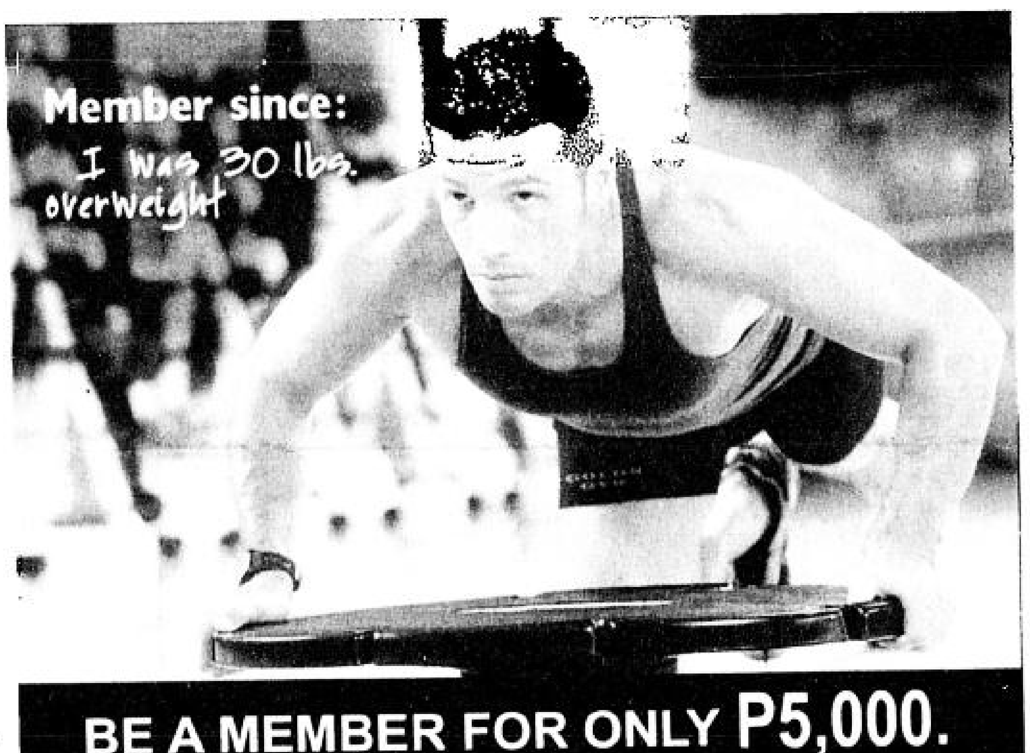
When asked by this writer to give more details about Ayesa, Roces wrote via e-mail: "Miguel was born in the Philippines but he came to Australia as a young boy with his parents and brother. I have seen him perform on television as he was often asked to perform during Sydney's annual Christmas carols program where top entertainers and singers are invited to perform for charity. Yes, he sings and plays the guitar. In Sydney, he has appeared in 'Buddy Holly' (as the guy who sings 'La Bamba') and 'Rent.' In London, he has appeared in musical shows, too."

Roces is getting ready to publish a book on the *ilustrados* of the 19th century titled "Adios Patria Adorada (The Filipino as Ilustrado, the Ilustrado as Filipino)." He told INQUIRER Entertainment that he spoke to Miguel's mother in London. The prolific painter and author has another book, this one on the painter Anita Magsaysay-Ho, to be published late this year. He joked in his e-mail to Lopez, "I am related to a famous rock star!"

PINOY-AUSSIE/ A2-4

FILIPINO-AUSTRALIAN Mig Ayesa and the other "Rock Star: INXS" finalists (from left): Ayesa, Neal Carlson, Jordis Unga, Tara Slone, Jessica Robinson, Daphna Dove, Deanna Johnston, Brandon Calhoon, Heather Luttrell, Suzie McNeil, J.D. Fortune, Wil Seabrook, Ty Taylor, Marty Casey and Dana Robbins.

AAP



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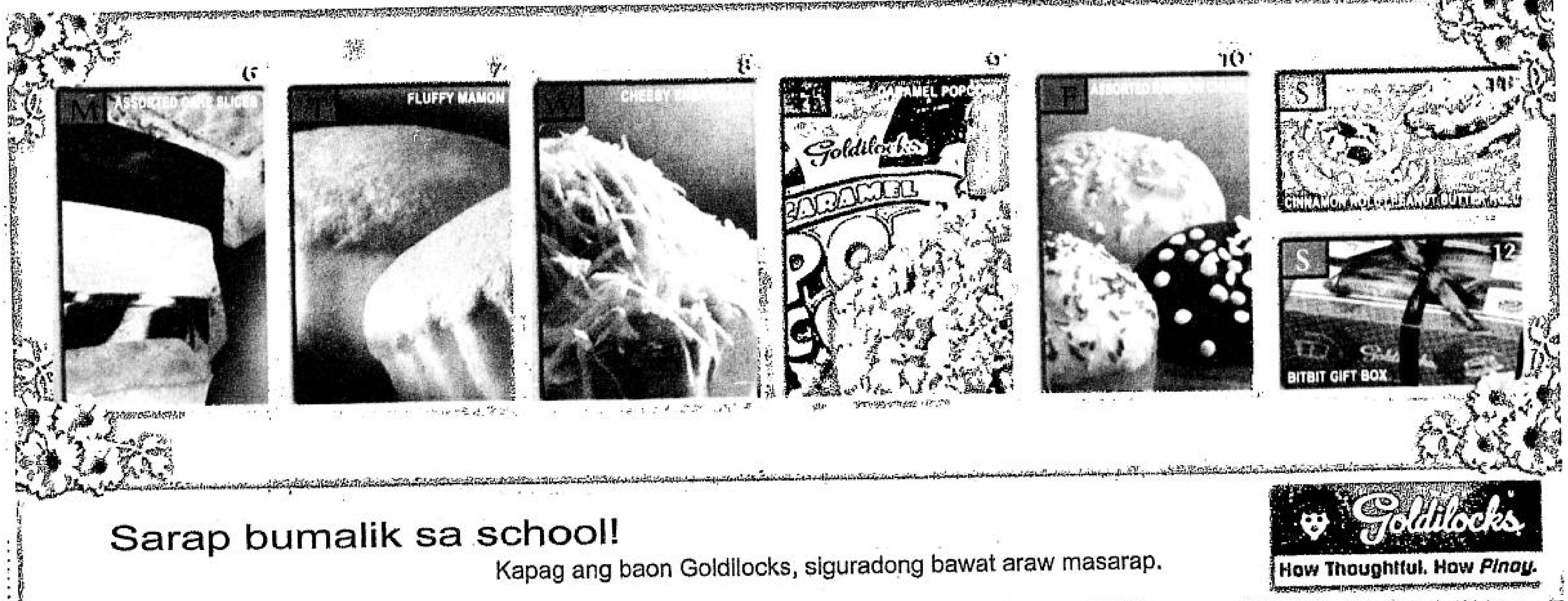

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Nancy, *tsinelas* lady

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

FILIPINO-CANADIAN actress Nancy Castiglione has had an on-going love affair with the island of Dakak in Zamboanga del Norte since she first set foot on its powdery white sand last year.

"The beach there is still very much alive," said Nancy, one of Philippine cinema's prettiest faces today. "The sand is white and soft. The crabs run around freely. You don't have to dig for shells; they just get washed ashore.

Nancy first visited the island in March last year to shoot an episode of GMA 7's sitcom, "Lagot Ka, Isusumbong Kita" in Dakak Beach resort. The actress got so enamored with the place that she now has what she calls her own little Dakak.

"This reminds me of how good I feel whenever I'm there," Nancy said, holding out a jar filled with sand and shells collected from the island.

It was in Dakak that Nancy met her boyfriend, Bullet Jalosjos, the resort's food and beverage manager and son of former congressman Romeo Jalosjos.

"I know I sound biased when I say Dakak is my favorite hideaway," Nancy pointed out. "But I'll explain—I fell in love with it just by going there."

And she still goes every chance she gets. This explains Nancy's huge collection of swimwear, rubber slippers and sun visors, which she keeps in the attic of her three-story home in Pasig.

Nancy's attic, which serves as her walk-in closet, also holds some of her favorite stuff, mostly things she brought with her from Canada.

FOOTWEAR

"Whenever I do shows in the provinces, I always go to the *palengke* to buy *tsinelas*. I have *tsinelas* from Boracay, Dakak and The Farm in San Benito in Batangas. I also buy *tsinelas* from every beach resort I go to.

"This pair of Wade shoes is memorable. I bought it when my elder sister, Theresa, came to visit me here about two years ago. I took her on a shopping spree. I told her to go crazy and spend up to P50,000. She bought a pair and I liked it. I bought one for myself.

"I like this pair of wedges from Nine West very much. One of my dogs chewed on a 2-week-old pair, so I bought another. This is expensive, and it hurt me when he ate it. This looks good with anything *pa naman*.

"I'm still trying to get used to wearing ballet shoes. They're in fashion right now. I'm small and I usually go for really high heels."

HATS

"I have hats for when I go to Canada, to the beach, or for when I'm dressing up funky. For Canada, I wear knitted stuff. In my city, it's really really cold. For eight months in a year we wear toques. Here in the Philippines they call them bonnets. When I came here, everyone was saying bonnets, bonnets and I didn't know what they were talking about.

"For the beach, I wear scarves or headbands to keep my bangs off my face. I have visors, too. But I normally use them for tapings."

ALL-TIME favorite nightie

PEASANT dress from Top Shop

FOUR-year-old denims from Greenhills flea market

HEADBANDS keep her bangs off her face

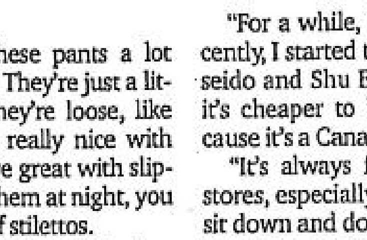
SEQUINED belts for when she's "dressing up funky"

OUT OF THE CLOSET

SWIMWEAR

"I just received a whole bunch of swim wear for free. Unica Hija, my sponsor, started selling swimsuits this year. I also received items from Top Shop, Chocolate and Rustan's for a magazine pictorial that I did. I did another pictorial for Speedo recently.

"I like sunbathing, so I prefer the really skimpy ones. I don't like getting tan lines. I wear the Unica Hija suits just for walking around the beach or while shopping. I change into the really skimpy Top Shops for tanning."



TOPS

"I like things that I can wear during the day and which, just by changing accessories, I can also wear at night. It makes life so much easier. This new shirt from Unica Hija is really good. Even though it's not fitted, it hugs the figure nicely.

"I like halter-tops because I don't like wearing bras. My halters are usually made of thick materials. You can look nice and feel free at the same time."

PANTS

"I've been wearing these pants a lot lately. They're not capris. They're just a little above the ankles. They're loose, like beach pants. They look really nice with plain white tees. They are great with slippers. If you want to use them at night, you could just put on a pair of stilettos.

"I've had this pair of blue jeans for four years now. This is just from a flea market in Greenhills. I like low-waist jeans because they make my torso look longer."

DRESSES

"Before Unica Hija, I was a Top Shop freak. Now things are so much easier. Unica Hija has a lot of great stuff, like this is a pink-and-yellow wrap around dress. This looks really nice with those little white ballet shoes.

"I wore this pink gown from Paul Cabral at the Star Awards when I won Best New Female Artist for Television. It's the first gown I ever bought. Later that year, I wore another Paul Cabral to Star Awards when I won Best New Female Artist, this time, for movies.

"Back when I was still hosting 'StarStruck,' I was into these Aubrey Hepburn-inspired dresses.

"Now, I'm into peasant dresses. I like flowing fabrics. I also like the '60s look. I got most of them at Top Shop."

JACKETS

"I bought my newest winter jacket from Mango. It's a pea green jacket that I used when I went home for my dad's birthday last February. My sister kept it because she said I'm going back to the Philippines, anyway.

"For going to the theater, I just wear my favorite brown cotton hooded sweater from Top Shop."

ACCESSORIES

"This belt is from a pictorial for Uno Magazine. I liked it and the staff members said I could take it home with me. I really go for bright pink. Now I have all the colors—there's white, black and red.

"I like big eyeglasses; those that cover the whole face. I don't really think much about them when I shop. I don't care if people think the glasses don't look good on me. I just buy them because I like them."

COSMETICS

"For a while, I used only Mac. But recently, I started trying Christian Dior, Shiseido and Shu Eumura. I've learned that it's cheaper to buy Mac in Canada because it's a Canadian brand.

"It's always fun to shop in cosmetic stores, especially when the agent lets you sit down and do your face for you. I think that's where I learned to do my makeup."

SCENTS

"I usually always buy perfumes with the lotion and the shower gel. I like layering. I go for scents that last long. My favorite perfume maker is Givenchy. I like its Hot Couture scent. Givenchy perfumes are very distinct. And you don't need to layer because the scent stays on the whole day.

"I like being associated with a certain smell. If people smell this particular perfume, I want them to think of me. There was a time when I had a roommate—my best friend. She would know that that I had just left before she arrived by smelling my perfume in the air. My latest discovery from Givenchy is called Very Irresistible."

NANCY wears only Givenchy.

SLEEPWEAR

"Honestly, I sleep in my dusters. My favorite is my Snoopy duster. It was sent to me in Canada by one of my cousins here. When I came here, I brought it with me. It's so easy to slip on and off. I also like men's pajamas. I stole one pair from my dad when I went home."

SWIMSUITS for tanning apart from those for walking around the beach

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The w

I HAVE known **Dina Bonnevie** since her "Katorse" days. I used to hang out with her sister **Aileen** a lot. Dina has always been very outspoken. She says what she feels and means what she says. Ms D never has a hidden agenda. She tells it like it is. That's why when news broke out that she and her beau **Timothy Riggenberg** allegedly duped people into investing in a telecommunications company, I refused to believe it. Being frank and straightforward are Dina Bonnevie trademarks on and off cam.

That was so out of character, I thought. I knew that something was wrong somewhere.

I immediately texted Dina to get her side of the story. She texted back: "I will send you my statement. Please help me. I am innocent."

Innocent but not ignorant. Ms D knows the ins and outs of the business that she and Tim are engaged in. It's just unfortunate that she has been dragged into the mess. But knowing Dina, she will survive. Ms D is a warrior of love's many battles and single motherhood's endless challenges. Is there anything she can't handle? Never heard!

Dina Bonnevie's official statement:

"June 2, 2005 was a major shock for me. I woke up early in the morning with my sister on the phone telling me my name was on national TV stating I was a swindler!! All my life, I have never cheated anyone of money, neither have I made any bouncing checks, I have paid my taxes and have been very generous to people who need my help.

"It is unfortunate that I was called names and misjudged so quickly without even getting a statement from me, much more given a chance to defend myself. I instantly felt like David fighting Goliath. Who was I to battle with the hungry and malicious press who would not listen to reason, but would harshly thrive on gossip and rumor mongering to put a person down?

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VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

ON MEMORIAL Weekend in the States, new films are expected to really rake it in at the box office, and this year's offerings didn't disappoint. In fact, "Revenge of the Sith" earned another $70.75 million last week, "Madagascar" grossed $61 million, and "The Longest Yard" pulled in $60 million. That's a total of almost $200 million!

And yet, Hollywood isn't in the mood to celebrate. While last weekend's grosses are impressive, the current film year, as a whole, is doing less well than 2004—in fact, more than five percent less.

What accounts for Hollywood's box-office blues? Media analysts point to the increased popularity of DVDs, sales of which have gone up 600 percent in recent years!

DVD copies of movies are popular because they offer greater flexibility and wider choice at a cheaper price. It's estimated that, with movie theater prices so high these days, a family in the States spend $100 to go to see a film together, while buying a DVD would cost only a fraction of that.

Other competitors include the Internet, video games, Tivo and DVRs. Young viewers are getting particularly hooked on video games, which they prefer to going to the movies.

Some viewers also stay away from movie houses which they find too cold, full of distractions (cell phones ringing, babies bawling), and too difficult to get to, as opposed to just popping a disc into their home entertainment systems and plopping themselves in front of their plasma screens to get their weekly dose of cinema.

Another factor that's keeping some people away from the cineplexes is the lack of really outstanding and empathetic movies. Thus, producers and directors should stop blaming the "disloyal" audience and simply work harder to come up with better films!

'Desperate Housewives'

US TV's hot hit show, "Desperate Housewives" has come to Studio 23. The ensemble drama has won two Golden Globes. It takes a darkly comedic look at suburbia, where the secret lives of housewives aren't what they seem.

Studio 23 will also screen "Lost," about survivors of a plane crash who must work together to stay alive on an island in the South Pacific; seasons seven and eight of "The Amazing Race,"; "The Disney Adventures," and studio features like "Signs," "Sweet Home Alabama" and "Shanghai Knight."

Movies on TV

ON HBO today at 12:45 p.m., "Top Gun." 2:35 p.m., "Soapdish." 9 p.m., "Fatal Attraction." 10:55 p.m., "Anger Management." Tomorrow at 9 a.m., "The Breakfast Club." 11 p.m., "Maid in Manhattan." June 8 at 6 a.m., "Dad." 12 noon, "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind." 9 p.m., "Raiders of the Lost Ark."

On Cinemax today at 12 noon, "Mary Shelley's Frankenstein." 5:30 p.m., "Don King, Only in America." 2 a.m., "The Man Who Knew Too Much." Tomorrow at 1:30

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Ann
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idrew to my room in prayer asking v this was happening to me, when ll I did was invest in a telecommu- s company that brought families i the phone for a very, very reason- and in superb clarity.

wanted was to be able to do this illy for the OFWs who work struggle to survive living away ir families, just to provide food on e. This is the same vision I share new Directors of iFreedom. Our y consistently strives and aims for on to be able to provide the satis- hat our clients expect of the prod- services we are marketing.

involved with iFreedom in April director for marketing and busi- elopment for Asia. In the last quar- e year, I was promoted to VP for in- nal business development. I over- rnational operations with our chief ns officer and see to it that all is in January 2005, I vowed to make ev- spic and span in the company and vriting the company's Total Quality ment System (manual and proce- I made sure everything was okay o doing, I decided to take on resolv- problems of the company or the t have not been addressed.

eforth, I got myself involved in he case that was filed against the v by Nilo Diongzon and four other ors. This was stemming from a rstanding between the former of- the Company. I was not part [of], her was I involved [in], the company then. Whatever mistakes and misunderstanding in the past have been resolved with Nilo dropping the case against us. I say us, because even if I was not part of the complaint, he had no choice but to include me since I am currently a Director of iFreedom Philippines. It is unfortunate that though I strive to resolve other differences that may have occurred in the past with some distributors, I am being held at bay due to trial by publicity.

"I know in my heart and in my soul that I am innocent, and was never involved in any of the misunderstandings in the past. I know that no weapon ever formed and hurled before me shall prosper, for God protects His people and that the truth will come out.

"The reason for my not granting interviews immediately, is due to the fact that a matter as delicate as this, needs to be treated with care and not to be addressed with any knee-jerk responses. I was upset, and still am, and feel my reputation is at stake. I did not live to stay 25 years in the business with a good name for nothing. As I always say, Bonnevie means good life, and so I have to live up to my name. I vow that for as long as I am part of a Company, a community or any team for that matter, I will always strive to do my best. My father always told me to not settle for mediocrity but to always strive for excellence in all endeavors. When trails befall me to question my integrity, I will not falter but hold my chin up for I know I have not hurt, or taken advantage of anyone.

"I thank God for iFreedom and the opportunity to serve His purpose through restoring relationships and communications in families and businesses here and abroad."

MS D: "I am innocent."

Finally, a match

I'M sincerely happy that **Kris Aquino** has finally found her match in cager **James Yap**. But as for their marriage plans in 2006? Hmm... anybody who really knows Kris will just smile and say "*Abangan ang susunod na kabanata!*" I suddenly remember the time when she was about to marry **Robin Padilla** but plans didn't materialize. She was so caught up in the rapture of love's initial bursts. Being a true child of Cupid (she was born on Valentine's Day), everything about love is magnified in Kristeta's world. It's just been a month since she and James started going steady so isn't it too early in the ball game to hear wedding bells already? Or maybe Kris' announcement serves as a warning to other girls not to snatch James away from her. After all she has been through in the name of love, Kris deserves a love that she can really call hers and hers alone.

Kris Aquino to tie the knot or not? That ought to be a trick question in her game show, huh? James, game *ka na ba?*............

For feedback, e-mail wateringhole-shangrila@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com

DID YOU KNOW...

Hollywood actor **Will Smith** wants to do everything. "Give me about 10 years, I'm going to run for president. If I can squeeze in an NBC championship before that, I'll do it."

fice blues even in Hollywood

p.m., "Reality Bites." 5 p.m., "Anzio." 10:55 p.m., "Empire of the Sun." June 8 at 7:45 a.m., "Orange County." 10:45 p.m., "Hercules and the Amazon Women."

'Kampanerang Kuba'

VILMA Santos' early starrer, "Kampanerang Kuba," is now a Channel 2 *teleserye*, with Anne Curtis in the title role. The series combines drama, fantasy and musical elements as it tells the story ly deformed girl with a beauti-

nised in a convent by strict but But she has a mysterious con- wo rich sisters, Lourdes (**Eula** l Lucia (**Jean Garcia**), Lour- ering husband (**Jomari Yl-** 's husband (**Yul Servo**), and empered daughter (**Jodi San-**

e interests are **Luis Manzano**, **autista** and **Patrick Garcia**. are played by **Malou de Guz-** **t Mortiz**, **Cherry Pie Picache** **Soriano**.

nition'

new album, "The Definition," egued together for a total par- Choice cuts include "Head- ib My Back," "I'm About to Get Somethin'," "Hush," "Every el the Beat."

hallenges'

n. and 10 p.m. on June 12, sts "Global Challenges." Fea- de an update by **Satinder** he tsunami in Sri Lanka; **Be-** **ard** on harnessing the sun's wer a solar plane around the a survey of innovations that he visually impaired and the ccess the Internet.

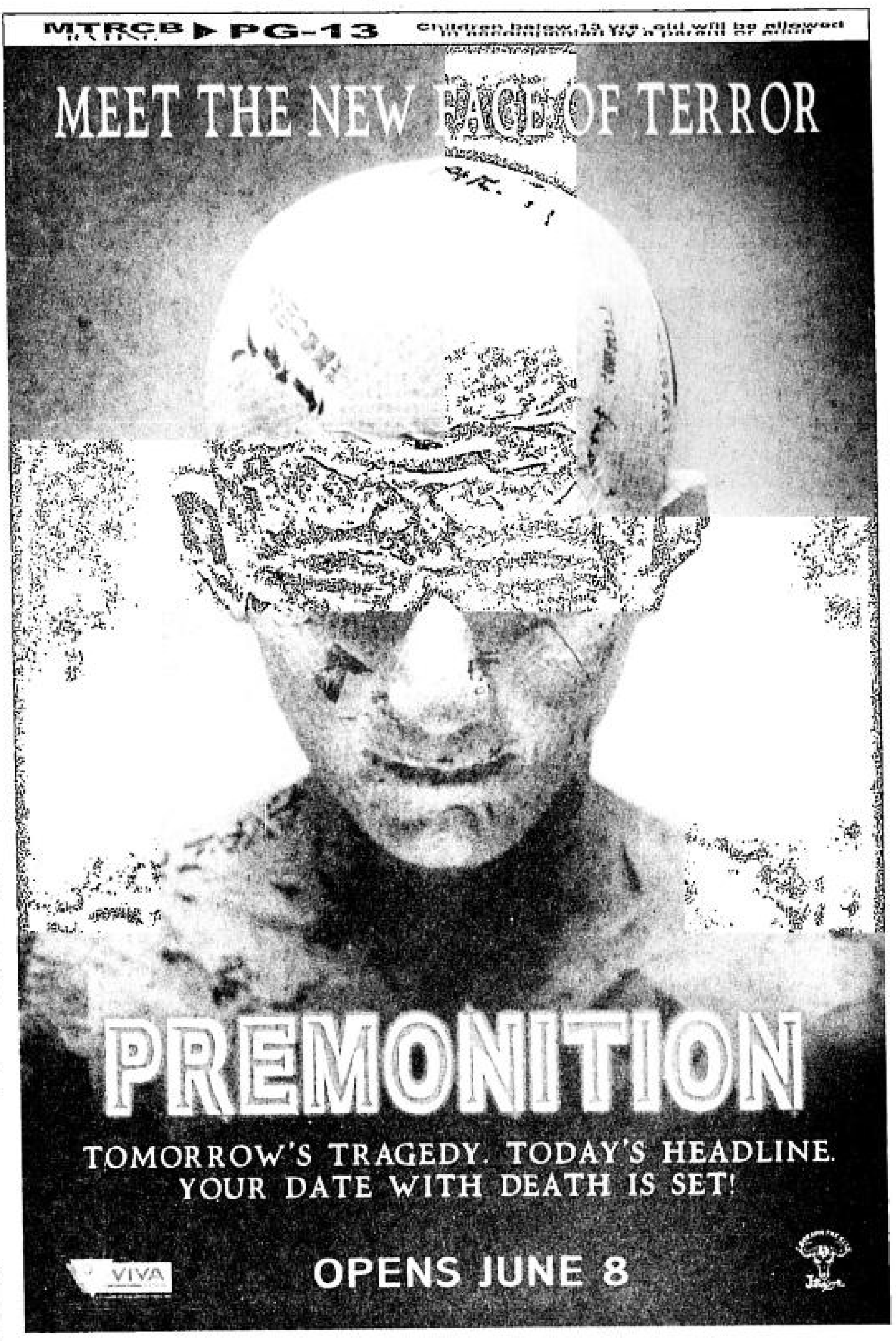
on Network

Saturday, June 18 at 2 p.m. work telecasts "Hoggie," about ative who's a whiz at putting ogether to create wacky vehi- pons for his fellow operatives mplish their missions.

niering on June 18, at 7:30 30 p.m., is "Gransazers." The s the descendants of an ad- ent civilization assemble their otect humanity from aliens. s must use the powers of the to find their ancestors' most apon, the Ultra God Stars, to lien invasion.

ck album

dtrack album of the current Like Love," starring **Ashton** Amanda Peet, is an eclectic rar tunes and contemporary include '90s favorites like Blind's "Semi-charmed Life," n's "Walkin' On The Sun," and herry's "Save Tonight"; oldies "Mint Car" by The Cure and "If e now" by Chicago, and songs like Jet, Groove Armada, rphonic and Aqualung.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MEET THE NEW FACE OF TERROR
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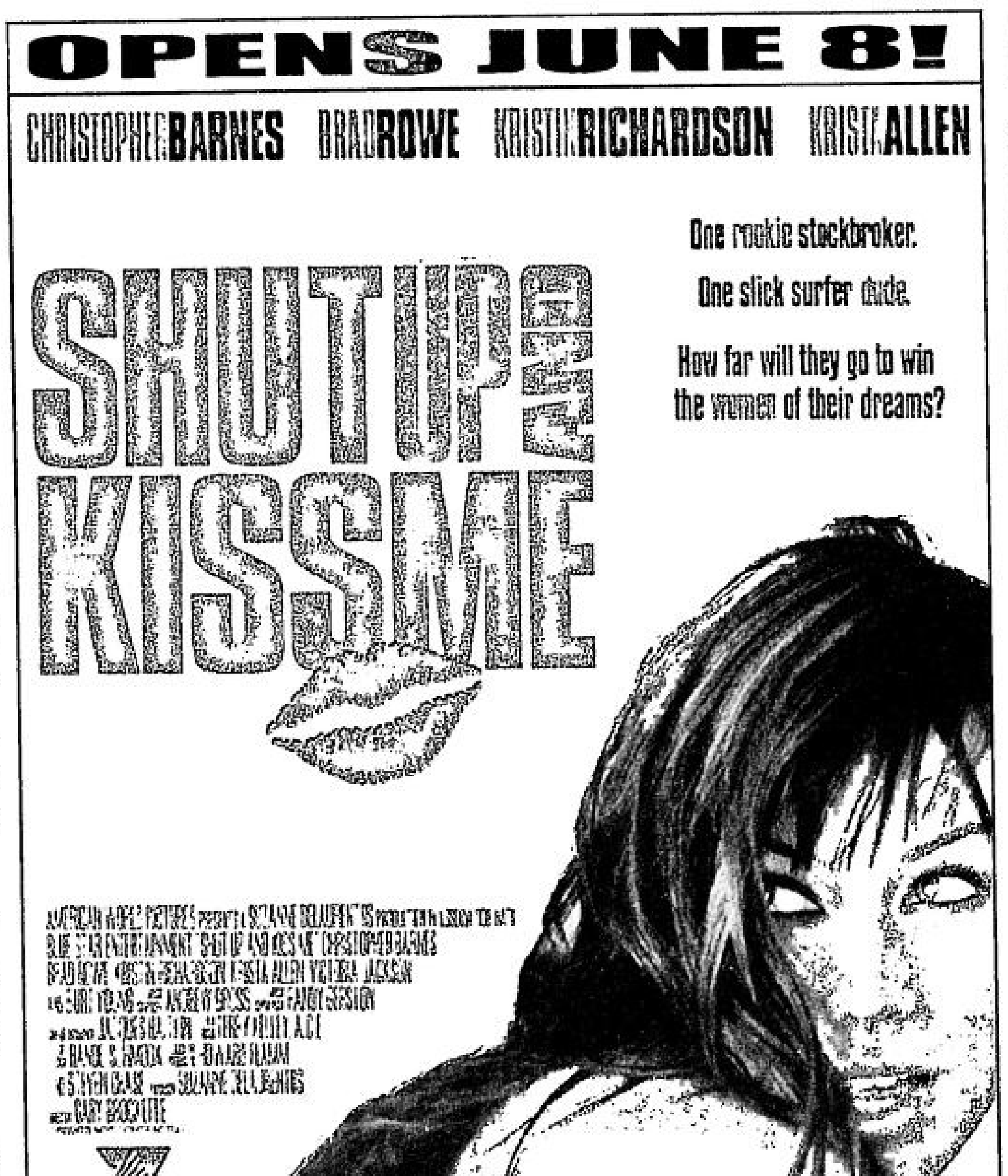
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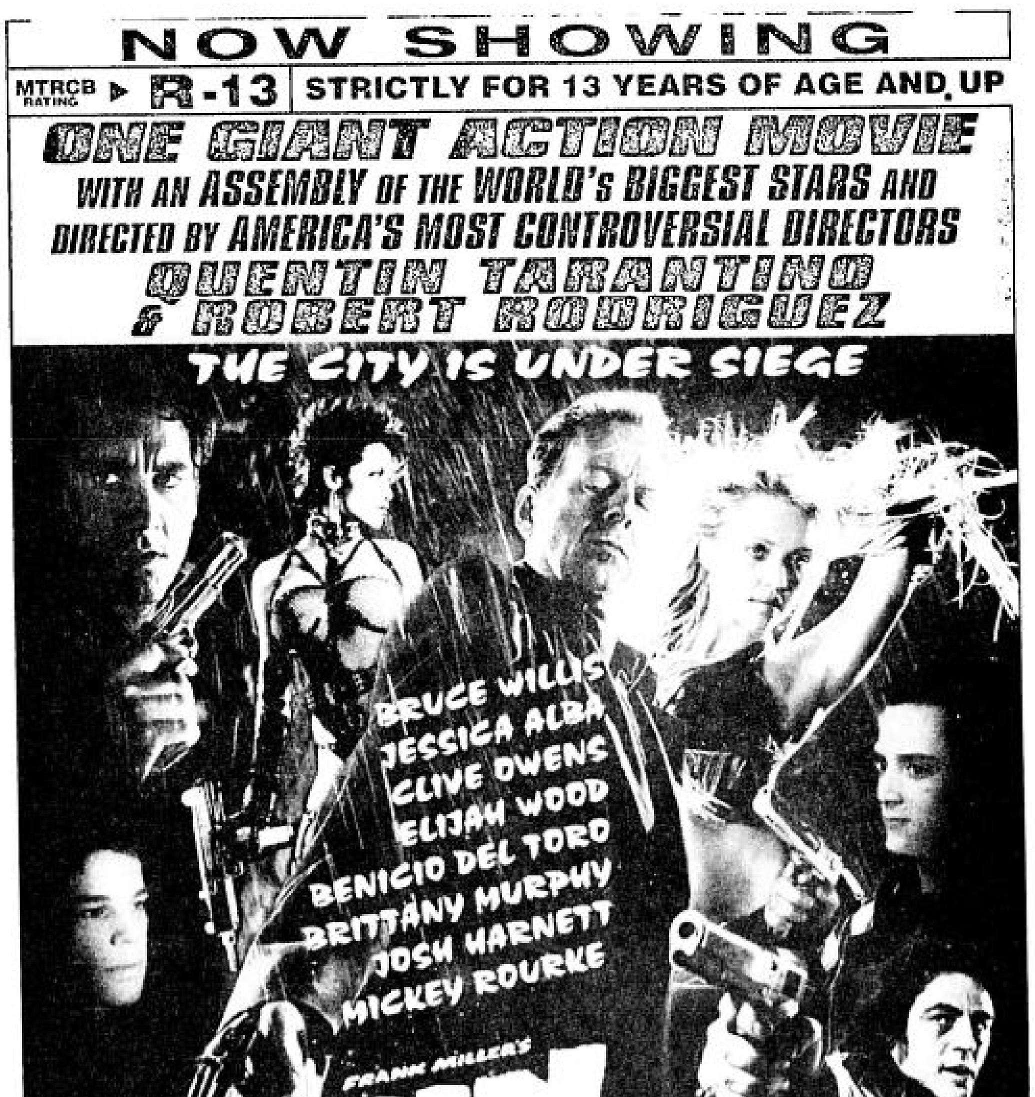
KRISTA ALLEN
SHUT UP AND KISS ME
One rookie stockbroker.
One slick surfer dude.
How far will they go to win the women of their dreams?
AMERICAN WORLD PICTURES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BRITTANY MURPHY
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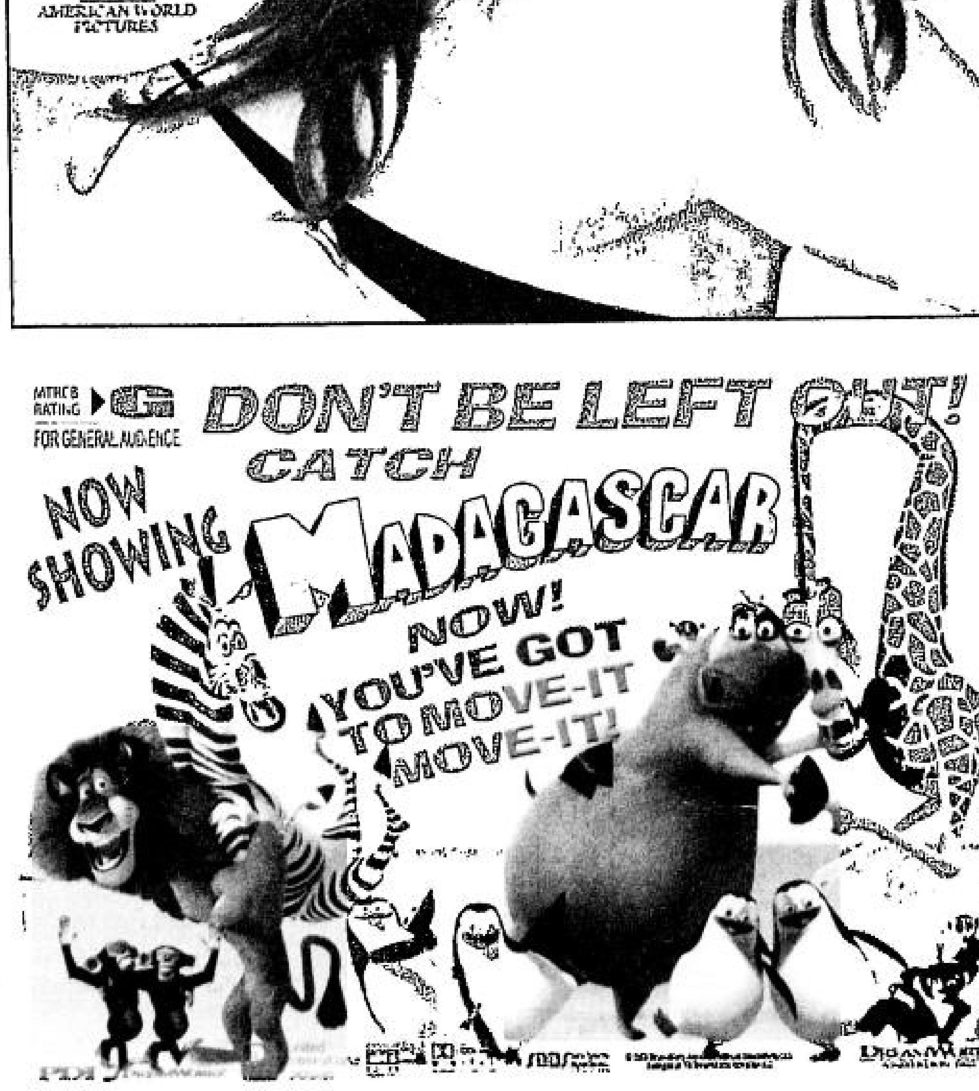
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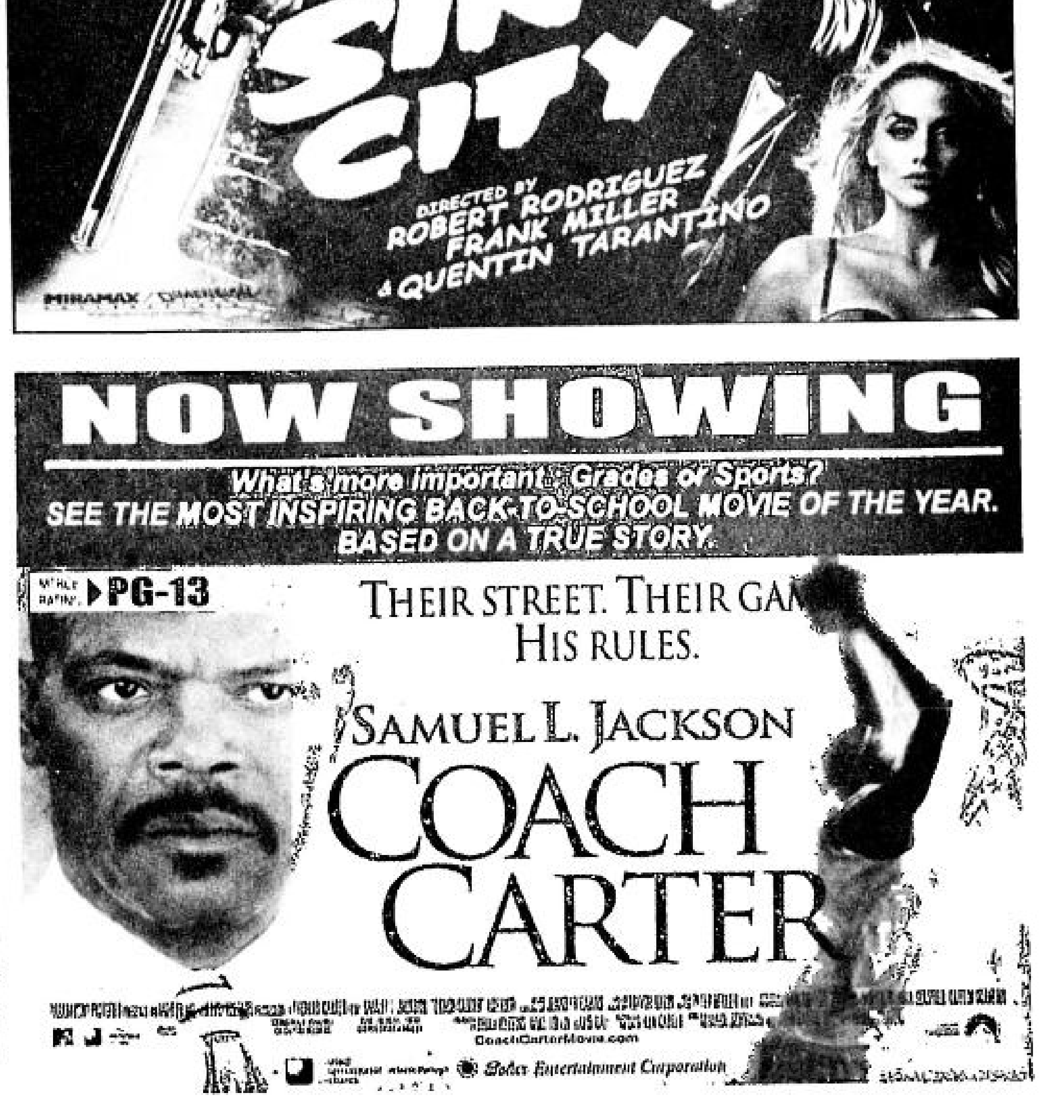
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Spielberg voted best filmmaker of all time

STEVEN Spielberg has been voted Best Movie Director of All Time by British film buffs, ahead of other famous names like Alfred Hitchcock, Martin Scorsese and Stanley Kubrick, Empire magazine said on Thursday.

"Steven Spielberg is the closest thing in movies to resemble the impact of The Beatles," Empire's associate editor, Ian Freer, said in a statement.

Freer said Spielberg "defined the movie-going life of an entire generation." British-born Hitchcock was in second place.

Scorsese was in third position with Kubrick.

Ridley Scott came in at number five with Akira Kurosawa at number six.

"Lord of the Rings" director Peter Jackson was at seven, Quentin Tarantino at eight, Orson Welles at nine and Woody Allen at 10.

Reuters

Pinoy-Aussie in CBS' rock star search finals

From page A2-1

MIGUEL Ayesa

A press released issued by CBS on "Rock Star: INXS" described Ayesa as "a married 35-year-old musician/actor born in Manila, raised in Sydney, Australia, and currently resides in London, England."

Tapped as co-hosts of the reality show series are E! Entertainment personality Brooke Burke and rock guitarist Dave Navarro.

CBS' press release also announced that while "Rock Star" will include a performance and elimination format similar to Fox's "American Idol," it will also feature "the contestants' behind-the-scenes interpersonal relationships as well as their weekly onstage performances. Unlike 'Idol,' 'Rock Star' will not rely entirely on viewer voting for the weekly eliminations, opting instead for a combination of viewer participation, the show's as-of-yet undisclosed judges, and INXS' current members."

Ayesa has a chance to become INXS' new lead singer, participate in a world concert tour with the band and sing on the band's new album. INXS' lead vocalist, Michael Hutchence, died in 1997. He visited Manila in the 1980s.

CBS also reported that the new series will include taped 'Big Brother'-like scenes "focusing on the contestants' activities in the Hollywood Hills house in which they will reside."

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the megamall cinema 1
UNLEASHED
633-1901

the cebu cinema 1
1 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
2 SIN CITY
3 STARWARS: EPISODE III

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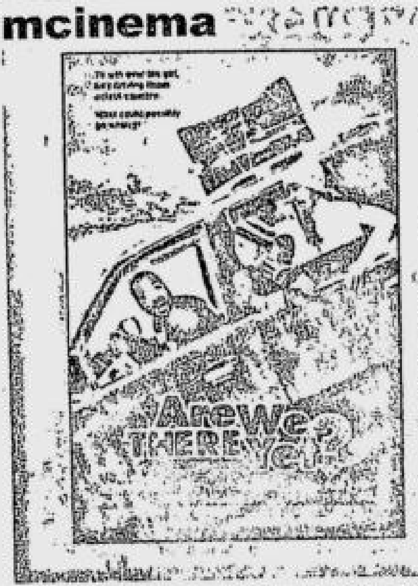

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3	STAR WARS III: REVENGE OF THE SITH	11:05, 1:50, 4:40 7:30, 10:20	GP
4	SIN CITY	12:20, 3:00, 5:40 8:20, 10:50	R-13

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SIN CITY R13 12:30,3:00,5.30,8.00,10:30	SHUTTER R13 1:05,3:15,5:25,7:35,9:50	A LOT LIKE LOVE PG13 1:10,3:30,5 50,8:10,10:30

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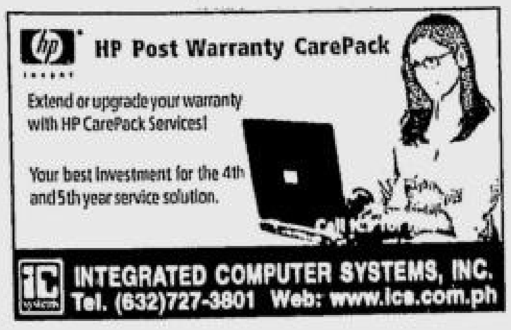
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UBS report says RP 'over the hump'

Sustainable turnaround in fiscal position seen

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES has gone "over the hump" and laid the groundwork for a sustainable turnaround in its fiscal position, according to UBS Investment Research.

In its Asian Economic Research dated May 30, UBS said the proof of the turnaround may be some time away, but the fiscal adjustment necessary to reduce the public sector debt ratio in the country could be one of the least costly adjustments among emerging markets.

The investment bank has forecast that the national government deficit would fall to 3 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) or P160 billion this year and the public sector borrowing requirement to 4.9 percent of GDP from 5.9 percent in 2004.

"Our forecast for 2006 is for a further reduction to 2.6 percent of GDP assuming that only 80 percent of the additional tax revenues will be used for deficit reduction, with the remaining 20 percent used to increase non-interest spending," the report said.

These forecasts translate to a primary surplus for the national government of 3.3 percent of GDP by 2006, following the enactment of key tax reform bills including the value-added tax (VAT) law, which was touted as the country's most significant piece of tax legislation since 1997.

"And as we believe the power rate hikes in September 2004 and a small one in April 2005 would be sufficient to stabilize the losses of Napocor (National Power Corp.), we think this is enough to reduce non-financial public sector debt by nearly 9 percentage points in 2005-06 and by 10 percentage points in 2010," it said.

By looking at debt numbers, UBS conceded there was no evidence of improvement at first sight as the debt-to-GDP ratio continued to increase. Such increase reflected the transfer of a P200-billion debt from Napocor to the national government, without which the debt-to-GDP ratio would have fallen slightly, it noted.

In fact, it said the fiscal consolidation could be less painful for the Philippines compared to other emerging markets.

"Bringing down debt ratios had cost countries such as Turkey or Brazil much more in terms of growth (at least initially)," UBS said.

"This reflects the fact that although public sector deficits have been high for a long time, the increase in debt has at no point been explosive," it said.

The investment bank noted that the Philippines was enjoying a very long average debt maturity, which meant that the annual borrowing requirement was small. This, in turn, could provide a considerable degree of protection against occasional interest rate spikes, it stressed.

It also noted that ample liquidity in the domestic bond market had allowed the government to borrow at very low rates in recent years.

But UBS warned that there were key risks to the improvement in the country's fiscal dynamics:

- President Macapagal-Arroyo could

UBS/ B8

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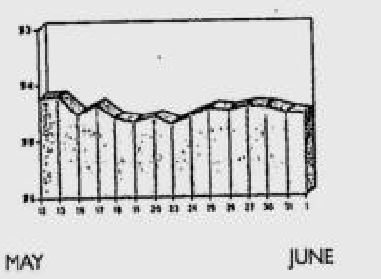

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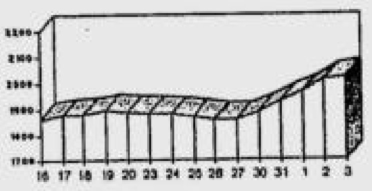
STOCK MARKET

Profit-taking seen this week

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

ANALYSTS expect some profit-taking this week coupled with uncertainty over the political drama brewing at the Senate over a probe on the illegal numbers game "jueteng."

"The wild card for (this) week is the possible political drama at the Senate, which is likely to be far from over. Archbishop Cruz is set to bring more witnesses to the Senate inquiry on jueteng by Monday. Investors will continue to monitor the developments at the Senate," BPI Trade wrote in its weekly report.

"There may be some profit taking this week given the rise in prices. However, we still expect accumulation as the market corrects," it added.

The main index gained 147.08 points to close last week at 2,022.49, or up by 7.84 percent.

Analysts said this was mainly due to the improvement in the country's fiscal performance and hopes the economy would be stronger in the second half.

PROFIT-TAKING/ B0

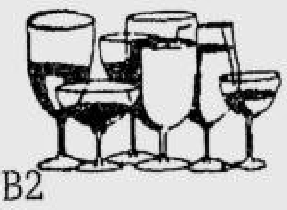
WHAT'S INSIDE

'Hot money' inflows soar to $1.8B in January-May /B3

Equitable ramble
COCKTALES /B2

PNR to pay P220-M debt /B5

Korean firms urged to invest in mining /B7



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Equitable ramble

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

EQUITABLE PCIBank director Fulgencio Factoran Jr. was not at all pleased that the confidential draft of his impassioned letter to the independent directors of the bank had been leaked and published in Friday's Cocktales.

In any case, that draft was never sent.

A nominee of the Social Security System, Factoran instead signed a committee-drafted memorandum saying he and fellow SSS nominees in the bank board, Ramon Jabar and Ma. Luz Generoso, support the position put forward in an earlier letter by SSS president/CEO Corazon dela Paz.

In both letters, the SSS bloc urged Equitable PCIBank chair Antonio Go and the rest of the board members to "compel the bank to desist from voting" the 10 percent "treasury" shares being held by a bank subsidiary, especially in the light of a Bangko Sentral opinion that such shares should be voted pro-rata by the different shareholders' groups, and not just appropriated by the management to enable the Gos to keep themselves, as Factoran had put it, the "artificial majority."

Likewise, the SSS bloc agreed with the GSIS representative in the bank board, Reynaldo Palmiery, who proposed that the nominations committee meet at least 10 days before the shareholders' meeting in July to prevent a repetition of last year's 11th hour disenfranchisement of board nominees deemed not sympathetic to the Gos.

"(But) there has been a continuing resistance to this proposal," a frustrated Dela Paz told the bank board in her May 16 letter.

The other week, despite being in Jordan to meet the king of the Hashemite kingdom as head of a worldwide association of social security agencies, Dela Paz by phone-patch attended Monday's executive committee meeting to press their position.

"(But) the chair (Antonio Go) resisted all efforts and instead himself moved for an adjournment," with expatriate director Anthony Conway seconding the motion, said Factoran in a subsequent report.

According to Factoran, Go ignored the objections of vice chair Ferdinand Martin Romualdez, Dela Paz, and himself to proceed with the meeting and the division of the house.

"Instead, the chairman and Mr. Tony Conway left the meeting, followed by (Equitable PCIBank president) Rene Buenaventura."

Romualdez then remarked that there was still a valid meeting, since a quorum existed at the beginning, and urged Dela Paz to take over the chair. But Dela Paz instead asked Romualdez, being a co-vice chair, to preside.

Romualdez did, and called for a motion to vote on the motion, which was that the excom recommend to the bank board to refrain from voting the "treasury" shares in the next stockholders' meeting.

"There being no dissenting votes, the motion was deemed carried," the Factoran report said, adding that the GSIS representative voted along with them.

Still, "the corporate secretary (Nilo Divina, who is also the bank's general counsel and corporate information officer) claimed that this (voting) was not official and (that) he would not reflect it as such in the minutes."

Because of Divina's declaration, Factoran said he had to write down a report "to record what (had) happened."

Caroms with Caram

THE SOUTH Forbes house of Rosa Olondriz Caram is now being demolished, with the longtime Iloilo City mayor having been reduced to staying in the maids' quarters in the back of the sprawling property.

iBank had foreclosed on the 1,798-square-meter property at 57 Tamarind Road, but the feisty Spanish mestiza, who must be now pushing '80s, has refused to budge, apparently determined to spend the rest of her life, along with two loyal maids, in what used to be her home.

Luckily, the back property where the maids' quarters and the laundry area stand, about half the size of the foreclosed lot, is apparently still in Caram's name.

Since the bank acquired the front property, access to the maids' quarters has been limited to a narrow dirt passageway between 55 and 57 Tamarind Road. With the onset of rains, it is not even advisable to bring in a bicycle because of the slippery slope.

As of last week, the Caram property, which borders the perimeter wall of Fort Bonifacio, was still posted for sale at the iBank website with an indicative price of P71.8 million, or about P39,933 a square meter.

Caram is remembered in Iloilo City for serving as hermana mayor from 1969 to 1977, the first decade when Dinagyang festival famously took off.

One sister, Cookie, is married to Demetrio "Bolo" Tuason, whose family owns the Arms Corp. of the Philippines.

COCKTALES/ B6

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Profit-taking

From page B1

BPI Trade said the decision by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to keep key overnight rates steady also helped boost sentiment.

The online broker said the market rally was broad based. Leading the market higher were telecom firms Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and Globe Telecom.

Also ending higher were Ayala Corp., San Miguel, Meralco, First Philippine Holdings, Bank of the Philippine Islands, Equitable PCI, Philippine National Bank and Metrobank.

BPI Trade said banking stocks were also up in anticipation of a possible consolidation in the industry triggered by an offer by Banco de Oro to acquire 10 percent of Equitable PCI Bank through EBC Investments Inc.

Property issues were up due to low interest rates. Ayala Land gained 80 centavos to P8.50, SM Prime Holdings added 40 centavos to P7.90, while Filinvest Land rose 18 centavos to P1.60. Megaworld Corp. and Belle Corp. were also up 14 centavos each at P1.50 and P1.26, respectively. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

'Hot money' inflows soar to $1.8B in January-May

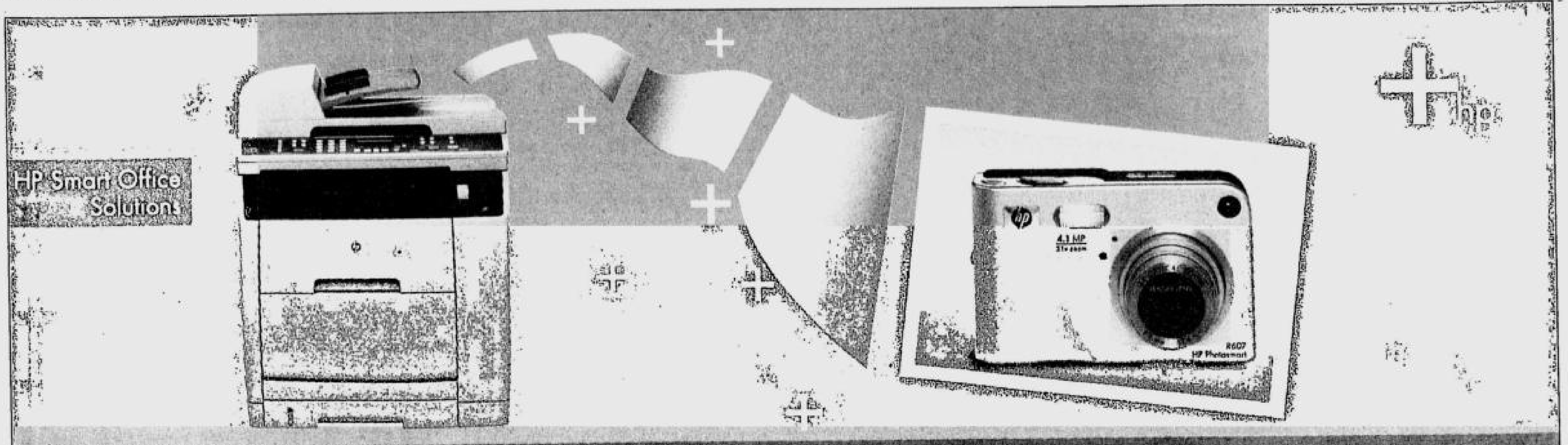
By Doris C. Dumlao

NET FOREIGN portfolio or "hot money" inflows to the country hit $1.8 billion in the first five months of the year, more than 12 times the level in the same period last year, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported.

BSP officer-in-charge Amando Tetangco Jr. said: "The sharp increase in the net portfolio investment inflows can be attributed to the generally favorable outlook on the economy, due primarily to the government's fiscal reform program that has already resulted in a budget surplus in April, the first time in four years, and a lower-than-targeted cumulative budget deficit for the first four months of the year."

The estimated portfolio inflows of $1.8 billion were for the period Jan. 1 to May 20, compared with the $144.8 million during the same period in 2004 and the $486.6 million for the whole of 2004.

HOT/B15



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NTC insists Internet voice calls a value-added service

By Abigail L. Ho

DESPITE opposition from telecom firms, the National Telecommunications Commission justified its stance that voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) was a value-added service (VAS) as it was not considered a conventional service offered by telecom firms at the time the deregulation law was formulated.

In a recent presentation to industry stakeholders, NTC deputy commissioner Jorge Sarmiento said "timing" was a key factor in determining whether VoIP fell under the VAS category or was a service that could only be offered by telecom firms with congressional franchises.

RA 7925, or the Public Telecommunications Policy Act of 1995, defined a VAS provider as "an entity which, relying on the transmission, switching and local distribution facilities of the local exchange and inter-exchange operators and overseas carriers, offers enhanced services beyond those ordinarily provided for by such carriers."

Sarmiento said the timing of the offering of VoIP became important, particularly in the light of VoIP being a service that VAS providers could offer.

"The issue is not whether VoIP is a telecommunications or value-added service. The issue is whether VoIP is a service not ordinarily provided for local exchange and inter-exchange operators and overseas carriers," he said in his presentation.

"NTC's position [is that] VoIP is a value-added service because it is an enhanced service beyond those ordinarily provided for by local exchange and inter-exchange operators and overseas carriers at the time the law was passed," he added.

In the case of VoIP, he said "time should be a critical element in NTC's interpretation of whether a service is ordinarily offered as this brought to the fore the question of whether VoIP was "ordinarily offered at the time RA 7925 was enacted."

Consistency with reality, he said, was another factor that the NTC considered when it defined VoIP as a VAS. As an example, he cited Web browsing and e-mail services now being regularly offered by telecom firms.

"Should ISPs now be prohibited from offering Internet services because telcos are offering them already? The answer is no," he said.

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Agriculture: reversing the decline

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MANY still think of the Philippines as an agricultural economy; strictly speaking, it is not. Agriculture, fishery and forestry now directly account for just a fifth (20 percent) of the economy's aggregate domestic output and incomes (GDP). Since the 1960s, the direct share of agriculture in the GDP had fallen below one-third, and by 1981, the sector's share was only 23 percent. In terms of employment, the sector's role is more substantial, accounting for nearly two-fifths (i.e. 37 percent) of all jobs in the economy. Still, the services sector accounts for close to half of both output and jobs in the economy. However, if one considers agro-processing and agricultural inputs manufacturing and trading (i.e. agribusiness sectors) along with basic agricultural production, about 40 percent of GDP and two-thirds of jobs in the economy arise from agriculture. Thus, dominance of the services sector notwithstanding, the fact remains that the welfare of the vast majority of Filipinos hinges on the health of our farms and fisheries.

Dramatic reversal

Unfortunately, agriculture also displays the most erratic growth among the economy's major sectors, as growth rates tend to fluctuate widely from quarter to quarter. We see this in the most recent growth performance of the sector. While the sector's full-year real GDP growth performance was well within the target for 2004 and exceeded the preceding year's performance, the most recent quarters have again seen dramatic slowdowns from previous quarters, due mostly to unfavorable weather conditions.

Up until the 1970s, the Philippines' agricultural performance, in terms of both output (agricultural gross value added or GVA) and, was superior to most of its neighbors and other Asian countries. Average annual growth of our agricultural output was 4.9 percent in that decade, well above the 2.9-percent average for 10 countries in the region. Those were the heydays of Philippine agriculture, when we were still being regarded as mentors to our neighbors' emerging agricultural scientists, who flocked to UP Los Baños and other leading agricultural schools in the country.

The picture changed dramatically in the succeeding decades. By the 1980s and 1990s, the country found itself at or near the tail-end of the same 10 countries. Agricultural output growth had slowed down dramatically, to an annual average of only 1 percent in the 1980s, against the improved 3.3 percent average annual growth of our neighbors. While our average agricultural growth performance improved to 1.8 percent in the 1990s, this was still below the regional average of 2.3 percent.

Labor, land productivity

All this traces to deterioration in our agriculture sector's productivity, which can be measured in three ways: labor productivity, land productivity and total factor productivity.

Labor productivity is simply the value of output per agricultural worker. Here we are not doing so badly relative to our neighbors. The Philippines' labor productivity, at about P19,754 per worker in 2003, remains ahead those of large, populous countries such as China and India, and of our neighboring countries Vietnam, Indonesia, and even Thailand. The bad news is that our labor productivity grew only by 0.7 percent annually in the 1990s, while that of our neighbors grew by more than twice as fast.

Land productivity can best be seen in the data on yields. The yield performance of our top five major crops, namely rice, corn, coconut, sugarcane and banana, followed a checkered history since the 1960s. Rice and corn yields grew fastest in the 1960s, slowed down in the 1970s, picked up again in the 1980s, and in the case of rice, has again recently slowed down. Coconut has seen a growth in yields since the latter 1980s, while sugarcane yields have been on a general decline. Banana yields grew rapidly in the 1970s, declined in the 1980s, and has rebounded in more recent years. International comparisons suggest that we are an average performer in terms of land productivity. Yield growth in developing Asia averaged 3.3 percent a year, with the highest growth experienced by China, Indonesia, Pakistan and Vietnam. The lowest growth performance occurred in Nepal; the Philippines is somewhat in the middle.

Technology and efficiency

Where we are glaringly behind is in total factor productivity (TFP) of agriculture, which measures overall efficiency and technological change. Our average growth in TFP of only 0.4 percent a year since 1981 is way below that of most of our neighbors, that include Vietnam's 1 percent and China's 3.6 percent. TFP growth accounts for less than 10 percent of our agriculture sector's growth, as against one-third for Thailand, and more than 40 percent for Indonesia. This suggests that technological change has been slow on Philippine farms compared to our neighbors.

Two things appear to have happened leading to this sad state of affairs. First, we have long ceased to become mentors to the agriculturists of the region; now we have much to learn from the same agricultural scientists from our neighbors that we originally trained in Los Baños, Muñoz and elsewhere. Second, our ability to get our farmers to use improved farm technologies has gotten worse through the years. Much of these trace back to our government's money problems. But just as important are our age-old failures in governance and policy implementation.

There is certainly a great deal of homework for us to do if we are to feed our people adequately in the years ahead. *Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu*

S&P urges gov't to reduce debts

By Doris C. Dumlao

GLOBAL credit-rating firm Standard & Poor's said the Philippines would need to reverse the uptrend in its debt stock in order to reduce its vulnerabilities and obtain a more favorable credit rating.

In a recent press briefing, S&P analysts Agost Benard and Philippe Sach said the country was a "significant outlier" among similarly rated countries with its ratio of debts to assets of 70 percent compared to the median of 40 percent.

"The Philippines, if we compare it to many of its BB peers, has a higher debt burden and has a larger portion of revenues dedicated to debt servicing in the form of interest payments," Sach said.

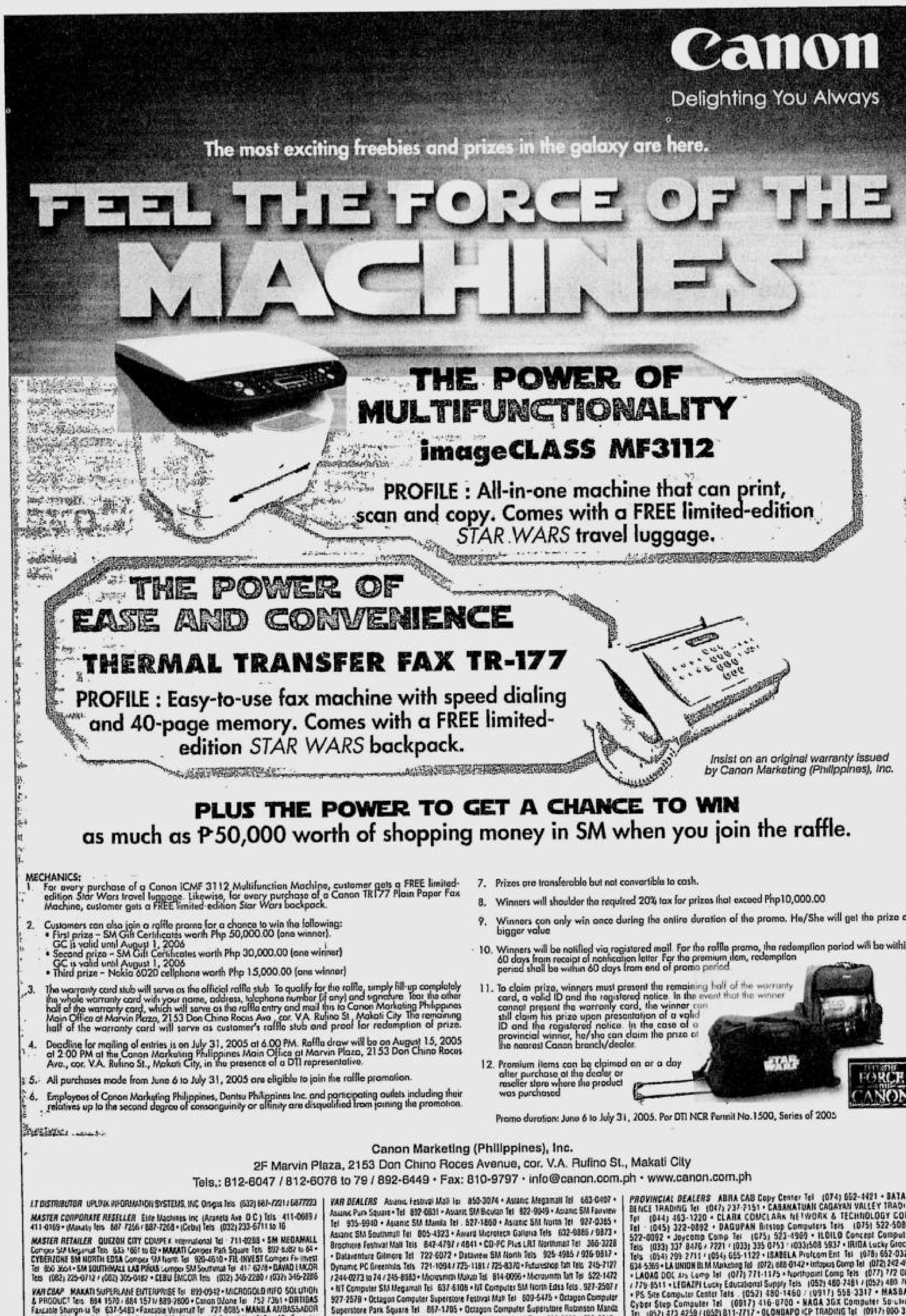
"For those reasons, it is immediately susceptible to a host of factors which are beyond control of the government, such as interest rate dynamics and exchange rate dynamics and we're moving into an environment of less benign interest rates, global monetary tightening and slower global growth," he said.

But Sach said S&P's stable outlook on the Philippines indicated that a downgrade was not imminent and that the rating firm was on a wait-and-see attitude on what would come out of recent fiscal reforms.

"It's not so much we're talking about debt reduction. We're talking more about debt stabilization at this point. With the [fiscal] deficits, debt has been trending upwards and it's increasingly been diverging from much of its BB peers," he said.

Benard said all the measures which promise significant reduction in debt would have to be well administered in the next couple of months.

"First of all, the VAT [value-added tax] rate will have to be raised in January. It will have to be implemented and after that we'll see how the additional revenues will be divided and if we see a concerted effort more toward debt reduction, certainly that would be a positive factor," Benard said.



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Gov't OKs payment of P220-M PNR debts

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL government, while pushing state-owned firms to become financially independent, has authorized the treasury bureau to release P220 million to losing firm Philippine National Railways (PNR) to service its maturing obligations.

The national government, as stated by the charters of a number of GOCCs, is mandated to provide sovereign guarantee to state-owned firms and give cash advances whenever these firms become unable to shoulder their debts.

Also, PD 1967 mandates the Department of Finance to pay obligations contracted by GOCCs that they could not shoulder for the moment to protect the credit standing of the country.

But the state-owned firms are required to pay the government back, as the cash advances are also sourced from loans.

The Department of Finance, head agency of the Bureau of the Treasury, said in a statement that the maturing obligations of PNR consisted of a P185-million loan from Export Finance Insurance Corp. (EFIC) and a P35.62-million loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC). The loan from EFIC fell due last May 15, while that from JBIC will mature on June 20.

"They (PNR) should restructure their operations and reformulate their rates so that they will be able to service their loans with their own income stream. We cannot have PNR forever dependent on the (national government)," Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima said in the statement.

Purisima earlier said the DOF has adopted a stricter policy in providing financial support to GOCCs, and that his office has tasked losing firms to improve their financial standing because the DOF could not tolerate their losses for long.

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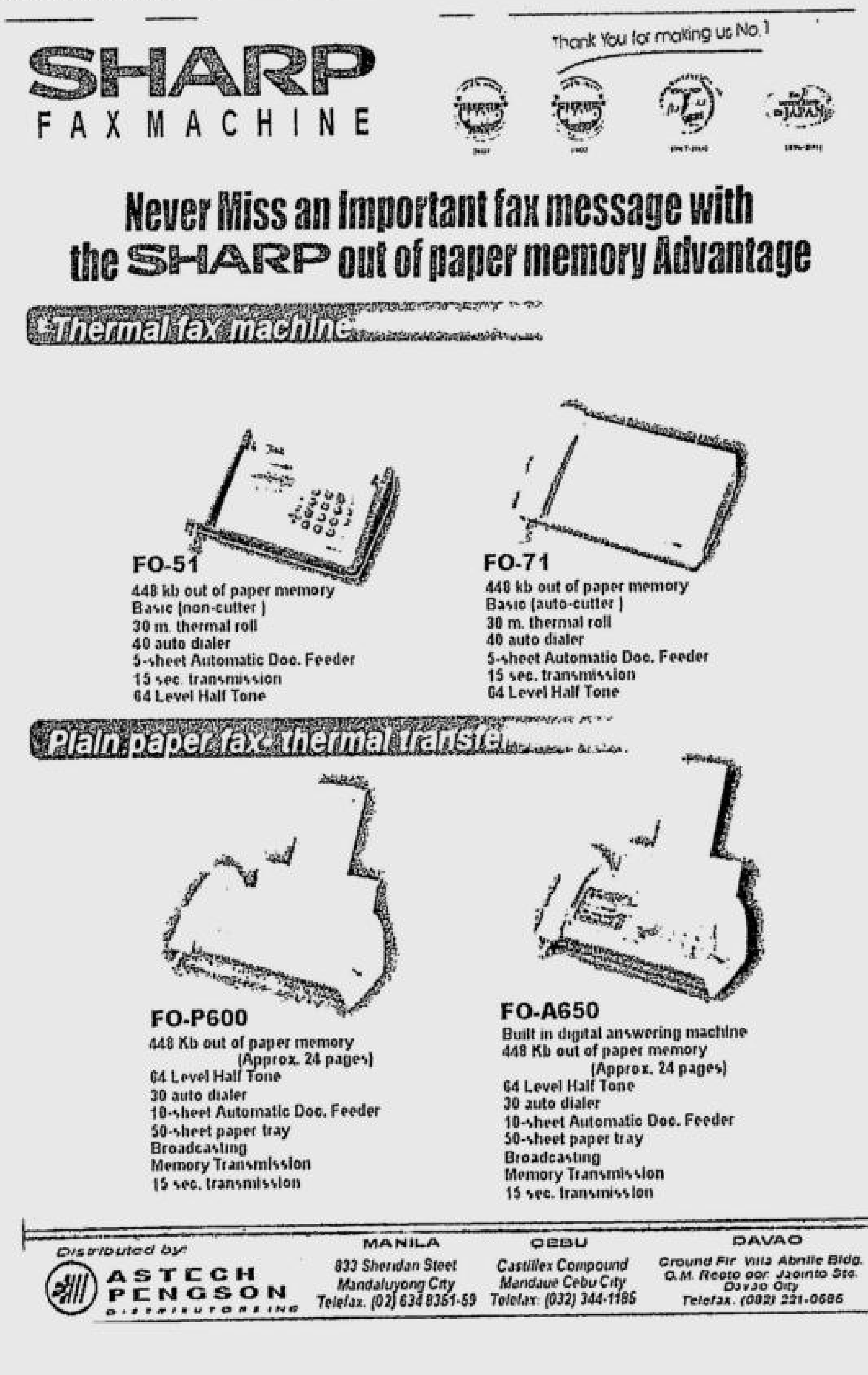
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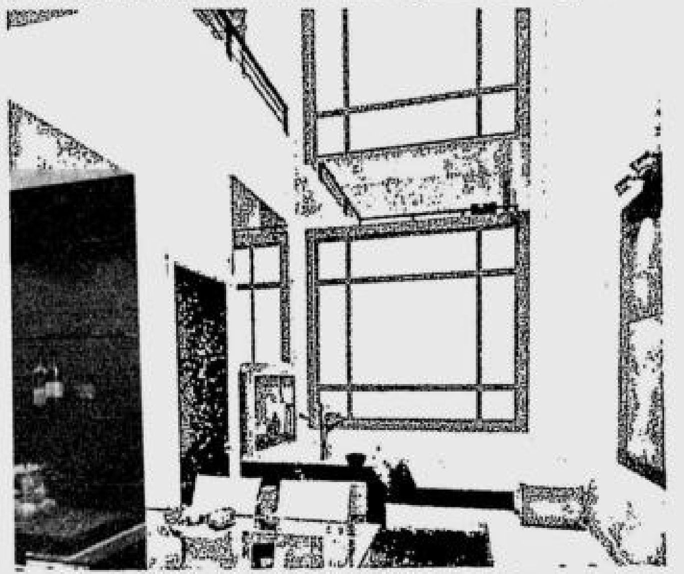

RLC's top priority is to delight customers. Nowhere is this more evident, said RLC High Rise Buildings Division General Manager Danilo E. Ignacio, than in our brand new project, **McKinley Park Residences**. "The whole property was carefully planned to spell out the good things in life - comfort, security, fun, and affordability. It's a place that offer pluses like no other."

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Gov't open to a compromise deal with Philnico

By Michelle V. Remo

IN A move to clinch a $1-billion potential foreign investment in the country's mining sector, the government has agreed to enter into a compromise deal with Philippine Nickel Corp. (Philnico) over its $300-million debt to the state.

A Chinese consortium led by Jinchuan Nonferrous Metals Corp. earlier said it would invest $1 billion in Philnico on condition that the government's claims would be settled.

Finance Undersecretary Jay Singson said in a press briefing that the government was amenable to an out-of-court settlement with Philnico.

Philnico's $300-million debt to the government stemmed from the sale of Nonoc Mining in Surigao del Sur in mid-1990s. The government sold Nonoc Mining to Philnico for a little over $300 million, the bulk of which remained unpaid to this date.

Philnico was not able to pay the purchase price due to financial constraints. It said it failed to get a partner that would infuse funds into the company due to the Asian financial crisis and the war in Mindanao in 1990s.

"This has been in court for quite some time now. We have to come up with a pragmatic and yet legal option," Singson said. He stressed though that a write-off of Philnico's debts was not an option.

The finance official said the Chinese investors, who visited the Philippines two weeks ago to discuss its investment plans, had given the Philippines six months to resolve the issue.

Singson said one option being considered was the conversion of the government's receivables into equity in the company. A debt-to-equity swap could even benefit the government, considering the $1-billion potential investments that would be infused into the company, he said.

In a related development, the interagency Privatization Council has agreed to transfer its trustee shares in two government-owned mining firms—North Davao Mining and Batong Buhay Gold Mines in Kalinga Apayao—to the National Resources and Mining Development Corp. (NRMDC)

Singson, who represents the DOF in the council, said NRMDC would be scouting for joint partners for its exploration activities.

"The first plan was for the government to sell them (mining firms) outright, but we thought the government could get more by inviting partners. We felt that NRMDC is technically qualified to undertake the projects," he said.

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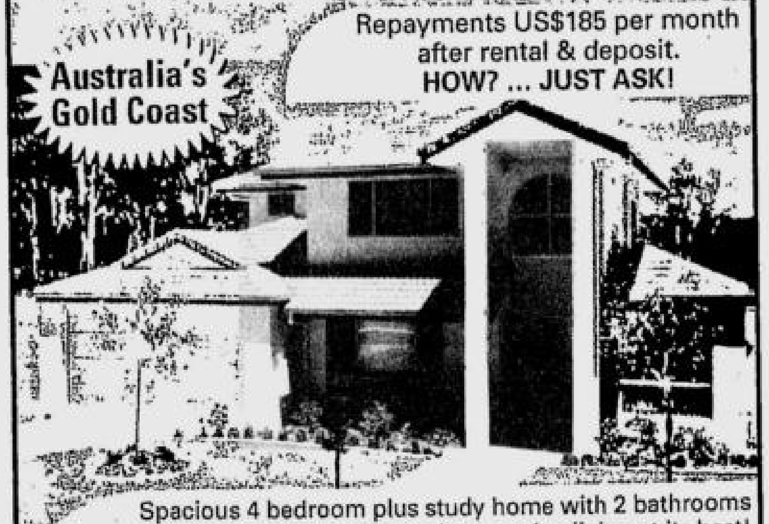

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DBP branching out to insure brokerage

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

DEVELOPMENT Bank of the Philippines is setting up a subsidiary that will engage in the business of insurance brokerage. Presumably, the subsidiary will handle all the insurance business stemming from DBP's lending operations. Finance Secretary Purisima is expected to give his blessings, if he has not already done so.

Almost from the day it opened for business as Rehabilitation Finance Corp. (RFC) after World War II, DBP has been an insurance intermediary, albeit illegally. When I joined the FGU Insurance Group in 1951, RFC was already deep in the insurance business.

The fire insurance business being generated by RFC's loans was parceled out to all the companies operating then. The business was so profitable that insurance companies began springing up like mushrooms. At one point, there were over 200 companies, with offices crowded around RFC's main building off the Escolta. Less than half of those companies still remain today.

At first, the companies scrambled for business. Everyday, DBP's insurance division was crawling with company representatives. To solve the bedlam, the allocation system was organized. In alphabetical order, every company got an equal share of the business.

Also, the DBP Fire Cover Note was devised. Designed by the companies, this form was DBP's written instruction to a company to insure a borrower's property. As soon as an authorized representative received the cover note, the insurance took effect. For all this trouble, DBP charged a service fee.

The allocation system went smoothly for over 20 years until, during the Aquino presidency, the Insurance Brokers Association complained at the Insurance Commission that the DBP's service fee was illegal. The insurance code that Marcos had decreed in 1974 required that anybody receiving any compensation (by whatever name that compensation was called) for placing/negotiating insurance should be licensed as an agent or broker. And the cover note was, in fact, prima facie evidence of the illegality of the service fee. The companies themselves were guilty of illegally paying commissions to an unlicensed agent that DBP was.

Chair Estanislao saw the light and disbanded the allocation system and waived the service fee. The companies, without an act of contrition, quietly agreed. As a result, the borrower could choose his insurance company and his broker or agent.

Now, DBP wants to go around the law by setting up a subsidiary. Maybe the move is legal (trust some lawyer in the legal department to find a loophole). But there are other considerations.

First, DBP no longer deals in small housing loans. Today, its borrowers are big-time. They usually have existing connections with the insurance industry. More often than not, they have preferred agents or brokers servicing their insurance needs. The DBP brokerage will cut these usually long-standing ties.

Second, DBP wants to encroach into a line of business that is already more than adequately handled and serviced by the private sector. Besides, the vast majority of insurance agents and brokers that service the insurance needs of DBP borrowers are small and medium sized businesses, the type that national government is encouraging with subsidies and cheap loans. By the way, no broker or agent gets nor seeks any direct government financial help.

Finally, is DBP not making enough money in its lending operations that it must buttres its income with commissions to be earned by a subsidiary engaged in insurance brokerage Why doesn't DBP leave these crumbs to the thousands of small and medium sized agents and brokers now deployed all over the cour try?

Cocktales

From page B2

Heard through the grapevine

TO celebrate the coming Independence Day, the Alabang Golf and Country Club has resorted to using miniature Philippine flagpoles as hole-markers.

In honoring the flag, the eager club officers apparently failed to realize that caddies have to desecrate the tri-color since the flagstaff has to be lain on the ground every hole play.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

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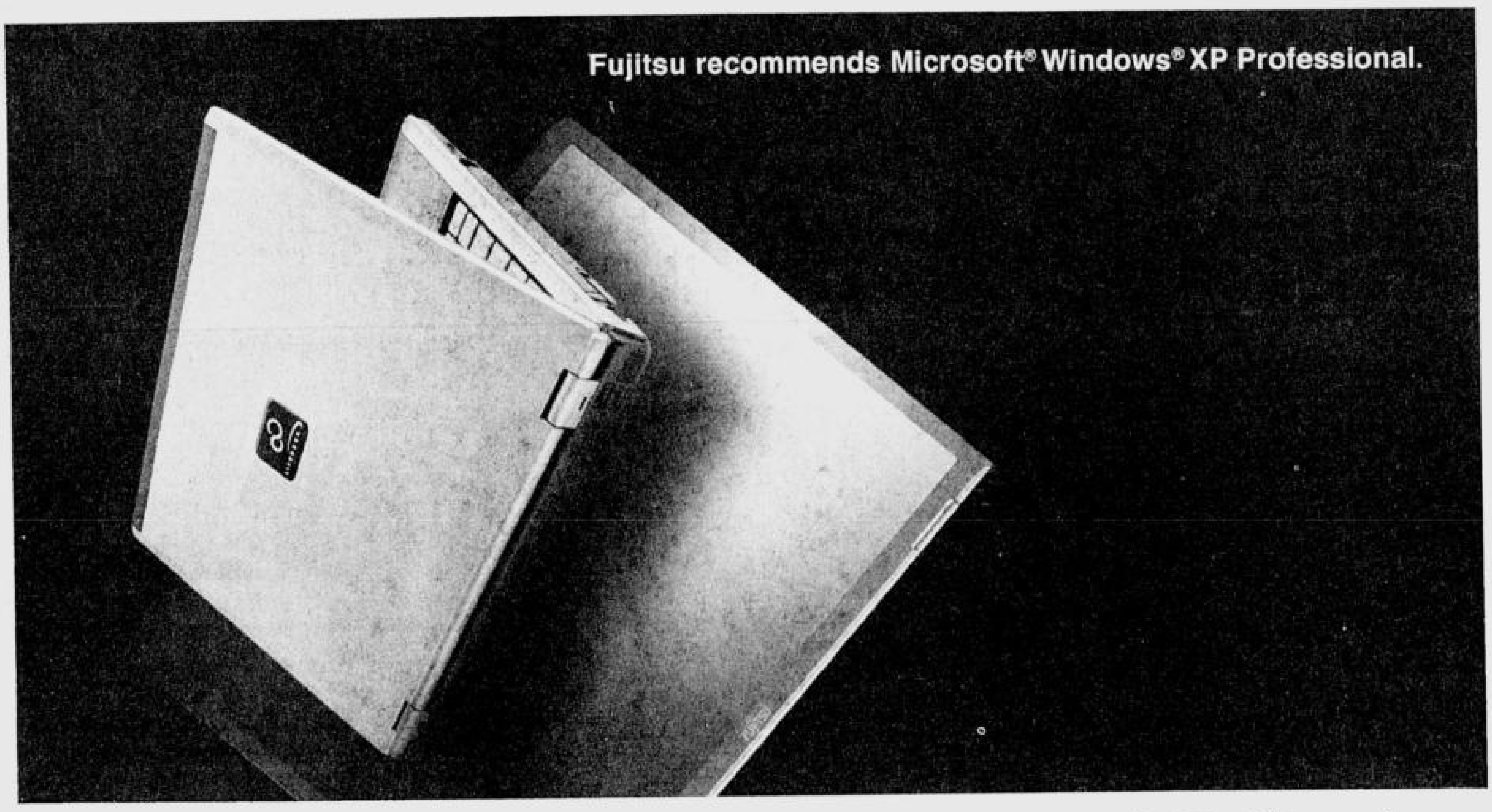

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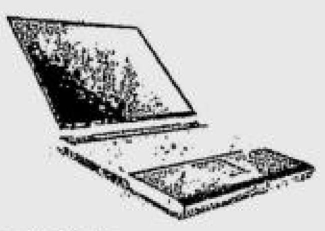

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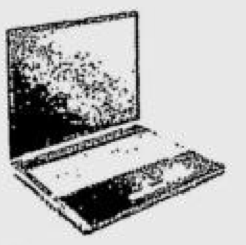

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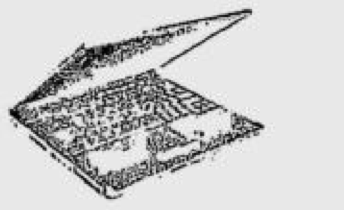

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intel inside centrino MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

Korean firms urged to invest in mining

By Ronnel W. Domingo

TRADE Secretary Juan B. Santos said the government and the local mining industry had brought the country's global investment campaign to South Korea through a mining conference held last week in Seoul.

Santos said the forum, organized by the Department of Trade and Industry and Chamber of Mines of the Philippines with the help of Korea Resources Corp. (Kores), aimed at enticing more joint venture deals with Korean firms.

The trade chief said the forum wanted to follow through with the Kores investment, with LG Collins of Korea and Lafayette Group of Australia, in the development of the Rapu-Rapu mine site in Albay.

Kores is a state-run and state-funded agency that supports Korea's mining companies and investors to ensure an uninterrupted supply of minerals required by Korean industries. South Korea imports over 60 percent of its total mineral requirements.

To start operations this year, the Rapu-Rapu project is estimated to cost some $55 million and yield some 254,000 dry metric tons of copper and 156,000 DMT of zinc over six years as well as 50,000 ounces of gold and 600,000 ounces of silver a year.

Santos said the country's mineral deposits were spread across the country with explored and identified metallic and non-metallic reserves estimated at $965 billion or P54 trillion.

Of the nine million hectares of mineralized land, only 420,000 hectares are covered by mining permits and about 8.6 million hectares of land rich in mineral deposits are waiting to be explored.

Among the pipeline projects that were presented during the mining conference were 23 large- and medium-scale mines including the expansion of Teresa Gold project and the Padcal project.

New projects that were being promoted include the Rapu-Rapu gold, Palawan HPP, Masbate gold, Diwalwal direct state development, Alday nickel, Nonoc iron fines, Didipio Copper, King King copper, Tampakan copper, Itogon gold, Canatuan gold, Siana gold, Far Southeast copper, Boyungan copper, Pujada nickel, Toledo copper, San Antonio copper, Mindoro nickel, Nonoc nickel, Batong Buhay gold, and Amacan copper.

Santos said that with the recent Supreme Court decision that upheld the constitutionality of the Mining Act of 1995 and allowed 100-percent foreign ownership of companies engaged in large-scale exploration, the country has attracted favorable response from several foreign mining firms.

He added that in the next six years, the country hoped to attract $6.5 billion in investments, export some $3.1 billion worth of minerals yearly and generate $490 million in tax revenues.

Security Bank gets 'stable' rating

SECURITY Bank Corp. recently received a "stable" credit ratings outlook from Fitch, an international credit rating agency.

The Fitch Ratings report affirmed the bank's present credit ratings as follows: long-term foreign currency affirmed at "BB," short-term foreign currency at "B," long-term local currency at "BB," support rating at "4," and individual rating at "D."

Last January, Security Bank was cited by Fitch for its "better" loan quality, with a particularly good performance over recent periods.

The report also cited SBC for its more than adequate liquidity and its substantial capitalization that will unlikely be impaired by asset quality issues.

SBC is among the country's major universal banks in terms of assets, resources, deposits, loans, capital and return on equity. The bank operates through a network of 114 branches nationwide with 83 Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) and the convenience of Bancnet's expansive countrywide system of ATMs.

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DR. NED ROBERTO, PhD is one of Asia's leading authorities on marketing. He is a much sought after consultant, speaker, author, and educator. He has taught at De La Salle University in Manila, Northwestern University in Chicago and INSEAD in France. He was professor of International Marketing at the Asian Institute of Management for 29 years. In 1983, he received the Philippine Marketing Association's Agora Award for Marketing Education, and in 2004, he was awarded the 1st Lifetime Achievement Award as Marketing Educator by the Philippine Association of Marketing Educators.

Dr. Roberto has consulted and conducted in-house seminars for Fortune 500 companies in the U.S., Europe, and Asia such as Procter & Gamble, Citibank, McCann-Erickson, Nestle, AC Nielsen, etc. He is the author (with Philip Kotler) of Social Marketing, which has been translated into seven languages, as well as the best-selling User-Friendly Marketing Research and several other books and countless papers on marketing.

Dr. Roberto earned his MBA and PhD in Marketing at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Business.

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Capitol Hills "A"	100K	-
Celebrity Sports Club	120K	-
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Club Filipino	100K	-
Eagleridge Golf Club "A"	290K	
Eagleridge Golf Club "B"	290K	
Eagleridge Golf Club "C"	280K	
Eastridge Golf Club "A"	90K	
Forest Hills (Individual)	100K	-
Makati Sports Club "A"	200K	-
Manila Golf Club (Corp.)	11M	10.8M
Manila Golf Club (Individual)	-	2.1M
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Manila Southwoods "A"	-	
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Metro Club "A"		
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Quezon City Sports Club "A"	150K	-
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Sta. Elena Golf Club "B"		
The Country Club at TH	400K	-
Tagaytay Higlands	750K	650K
Tagaytay Midlands		
Tower Club (Ind.)	300K	-
Valle Verde Club (Ind.)	100K	330K
Valley Golf Club		
Wack Wack Golf Club	6.5M	-

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GG & A Club Shares
SEC License Broker #007575 * As of June 6, 2005

CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,100,000	1,000,000
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	1,100,000	-
Baguio Country Club	550,000	530,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	40,000	-
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	70,000	-
Camp John Hay	200,000	170,000
Canlubang	550,000	470,000
Canyon Woods	125,000	-
Capitol Hills	95,000	-
Cebu Country Club	1,900,000	-
Celebrity Sports Club	120,000	100,000
Club Filipino	150,000	100,000
Eagleridge "A"	200,000	180,000
Eagleridge "B"	290,000	-
Eagleridge "C"	290,000	-
Fairways "C3"	-	300,000
Forest Hills "A"	130,000	100,000
Forest Hills "B"	200,000	180,000
Forest Hills "C"	220,000	-
Makati Sports Club "A"	240,000	190,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	250,000	-
Manila Golf (Corporate)	11,500,000	11,000,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	11,400,000	11,000,000
Manila Polo	2,200,000	2,050,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	400,000	350,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	700,000	650,000
Manila Yacht Club	Please Call	300,000
Mimosa (Individual)	-	120,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	-	320,000
Montemar (Individual)	35,000	-
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	220,000	180,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	300,000	180,000
Orchard Golf Club "A"	170,000	-
Orchard Golf Club "C"	450,000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	150,000	130,000
Spa & Lodge	600,000	500,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,300,000	-
Sta. Elena "B"	1,600,000	1,350,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	100,000	-
Tagaytay Country Club	380,000	350,000
Tagaytay Highlands	750,000	650 000
Tagaytay Midlands	680,000	650,000
The Palms Country Club	550,000	-
Valle Verde (Individual)	120,000	-
Valle Verde (Corporate)	200,000	-
Valley Golf	250,000	200,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	6,500,000	6,000,000

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SM Prime earmarks ₱6B to finish Mall of Asia

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

MALL OPERATOR SM Prime Holdings Inc. (SM Prime) is setting aside P6 billion to finish its biggest mall project dubbed the Mall of Asia along Roxas Boulevard.

The project, which is touted to become the country's biggest shopping mall, is slated to open by December this year.

SM Prime president Hans Sy said the Mall of Asia was 70 percent complete.

Aside from this major project, SM Prime has also spent roughly P1.8 billion for another mall it will build on a former race track in San Lazaro, Manila. SM San Lazaro is opening in July.

SM Prime has set aside P5 billion for capital expenditures this year. It has slated the opening of SM City San Lazaro (Manila), SM Valenzuela and SM City Molino (Cavite) this year. With these mall openings, total gross floor area will increase to 3.2 million square meters by end-2005 from 2.5 million square meters as of December 2004.

SM Prime has enjoyed consistent growth in its net earnings. Its earnings jumped 7 percent to P1.24 billion in the first quarter of 2005 from P1.16 billion last year, fueled by rental revenues from new malls opened during the period.

Gross revenues also climbed 7 percent to P2.49 billion from P2.33 billion in the same period last year.

Rental revenues accounted for the bulk of revenues, rising 11 percent to P2.05 billion from last year's P1.84 billion, due to additional income from two additional SM malls opened last year—SM City Dasmariñas and SM City Batangas.

But as a result of newly opened malls, operating expenses also swelled 10 percent.

Belle eyes debt-free status

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

TAGAYTAY leisure home developer Belle Corp. is looking at wiping out its remaining P2.8 billion in debt after it sells its seven-hectare property in the Manila Bay area.

With no debt in its books, Belle will be able to pursue more aggressively its expansion into Tagaytay Highlands.

Belle vice chair Willy Ocier said the company has set a price of P40,000 a square meter for its seven-hectare property along Roxas Boulevard to raise P2.8 billion.

Belle Bay City Corp. (BBCC), a 44-percent owned subsidiary of Belle, used to own through a consortium 19 hectares of reclaimed land along Roxas Boulevard that was earmarked for a mixed-use complex.

The property was to be dubbed Belle Bay City, which was originally planned to house a casino-hotel.

Due to the weakness in the economy, shareholders of BBCC decided to dissolve the company and subdivide the property among its shareholders. Belle received seven hectares.

This year, Belle is earmarking approximately P1.3 billion for its subdivision projects Plantation Hills and Saratoga Hills.

Plantation Hills is a farm lot subdivision, spanning roughly 50 hectares of land Tanauan, Batangas.

It is Belle's first residential venture since the Alta Mira and Lakeview Heights subdivision in 1998.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of June 3, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	32.5	33	32.5	32.5	556,500
Bank of the Phil. Islands	50	50	49.5	50	4,306,100
China Banking Corp.	770	770	770	770	10
Citystate Savings Bank	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.5	400
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.65	0.66	0.65	0.65	2,510,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	52	52	51	51	31,000
International Exch. Bank	19	19	19	19	17,800
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	31.5	32	31	31.5	612,800
Philippine National Bank	34	34.5	34	34	26,900
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	11	11	11	11	9,200
Security Bank Corp.	29.5	29.5	29.5	29.5	400
Union Bank of the Phil.	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	91,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	226	267.5	226	267.5	390
Manulife Financial Corp.	2450	2450	2450	2450	750
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	50,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1680	1680	1680	1680	230
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	11.75	12	11.75	12	70,200
Diversified Fin. Network	3	3	3	3	1,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.14	1.14	1.12	1.14	2,226,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	880	910	880	900	130,170
Ipeople Inc.	3.45	3.5	3.45	3.5	44,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.043	0.043	0.042	0.042	1,800,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.05	0.0525	0.05	0.0525	6,600,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	130,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2	2.2	2	2.2	9,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.35	3.4	3.35	3.4	1,333,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1585	1590	1585	1585	227,330
Ivantage Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.68	0.7	1,160,000
Philweb Corp.	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	24,000,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	16	16.5	16	16.25	46,000
Manila Electric Co. B	24	24.75	24	24.75	1,067,900
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.5	6.7	6.5	6.7	8,598,000
Petron Corp.	3.35	3.4	3.25	3.35	2,703,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.24	1.24	1.22	1.24	450,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.76	1.76	1.7	1.7	1,222,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	1,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	8.1	8.1	8.1	8.1	1,289,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.64	0.66	0.64	0.65	250,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	50,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.61	0.62	0.61	0.61	220,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	3.55	3.9	3.55	3.9	1,465,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	211,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	32	32	32	32	3,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	29.5	29.5	29.5	29.5	17,900
San Miguel Corp. A	58.5	59.5	58.5	59.5	29,000
San Miguel Corp. B	91.5	91.5	90.5	91	201,900
Universal Robina Corp.	13.75	14	13.75	14	145,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.25	0.27	0.25	0.26	220,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	13,000,000
Ayala Corp.	370	380	370	377.5	219,350
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.2	5.3	5.2	5.2	2,159,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc	0.033	0.034	0.033	0.034	29,400,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	235,000
APC Group Inc.	0.32	0.34	0.32	0.32	130,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	30,000,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	2,500
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.155	0.175	0.155	0.175	1,040,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.06	1.1	1.04	1.06	10,272,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	50,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.22	0.22	850,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	980,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.85	6,436,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.32	1.36	1.32	1.34	255,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	8.9	8.9	8.7	8.8	519,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	51	51.5	50.5	51	722,400
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	100,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.09	0.095	0.0875	0.0925	6,400,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.5	3.5	3.45	3.45	25,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.92	1.96	1.92	1.94	138,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.48	1.52	1.48	1.5	16,880,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.38	0.39	0.38	0.38	8,430,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	70,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.96	0.98	0.96	0.98	70,000
SM Investments Corp.	252.5	255	252.5	255	1,013,360
South China Resources Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	10,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.195	0.215	0.19	0.205	33,330,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	100,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.095	0.0975	0.095	0.0975	500,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	70,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.2	1.26	1.18	1.26	8,809,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.84	50,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.3	1.36	1.3	1.36	2,950,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	200,000
Philippine Racing Club	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	50,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	297,400
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	8.1	8.7	8.1	8.5	23,976,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	46,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.97	1	0.97	1	1,140,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.28	0.31	0.28	0.3	10,950,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.225	0.24	0.225	0.235	2,350,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.4	0.41	0.4	0.4	7,370,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.56	1.62	1.56	1.6	15,507,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.28	2.28	2.28	2.28	20,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.24	0.24	0.23	0.23	570,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	50,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	20,000
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	120,000
SM Development Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.1	8.1	7.8	7.9	4,728,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	71,000,000
Atlas Cons. Mn & Dev't	4.95	4.95	4.8	4.8	226,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	2,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.32	0.33	0.31	0.33	4,450,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.36	0.37	0.35	0.35	6,300,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	6,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	21,300,000
Omico Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	40,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.93	0.93	0.91	0.92	2,420,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.08	1.1	1.06	1.06	1,320,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	33	33	32.5	33	1,154,100
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	14,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	1,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	10,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.32	2.32	2.32	2.32	87,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.155	0.165	0.155	0.16	3,660,000

CURRENCIES

June 5, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.814531237	1.000000	54.6160
Japan	Yen	0.007526	0.009240	0.5047
United Kingdom	Pound	1.479107	1.815900	99.1772
Hongkong	Dollar	0.104657	0.128487	7.0174
Switzerland	Franc	0.650948	0.799169	43.6474
Canada	Dollar	0.652512	0.801089	43.7523
Singapore	Dollar	0.486897	0.597764	32.6475
Australia	Dollar	0.613768	0.753523	41.1544
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.160617	2.652590	144.8739
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.217209	0.266667	14.5643
Brunei	Dollar	0.485447	0.595983	32.5502
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000086	0.000105	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.020037	0.024600	1.3436
UAE	Dirham	0.22178	0.272279	14.8708
Euro	Euro	1	1.227700	67.0521
Argentina	Peso	0.282578	0.346921	18.9474
Brazil	REAL	0.337784	0.414697	22.6491
Denmark	Kroner	0.134416	0.165022	9.0128
India	Rupee	0.018673	0.022925	1.2521
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.214379	0.263193	14.3745
Mexico	New Peso	0.075461	0.092644	5.0598
New Zealand	Dollar	0.569841	0.699594	38.2090
Norway	Kroner	0.126347	0.155116	8.4718
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013671	0.016784	0.9167
South Africa	Rand	0.11974	0.147005	8.0288
Korea	Won	0.000804	0.000987	0.0539
Sweden	Kroner	0.10953	0.134470	7.3442
Syria	Pound	0.015691	0.019264	1.0521
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025966	0.031878	1.7410
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.00038	0.000466	0.0255

UBS report says RP . . .

From page B1

choose not to raise the value-added tax or the corporate tax rates;

- The deficit could fall less than forecast, undermining market confidence and reversing the virtuous cycle that has already started;
- The government could start to spend much more aggressively as tax revenue increases;
- Oil prices could rise again, pushing the trade deficit deeper into the red and eroding the current account surplus and putting pressure on the exchange and interest rates, and;
- An external shock could depress export growth or the flow of remittances from overseas workers, which at 10 percent of GDP have become the most important pillar of the country's current account.

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Poro Point starts ₱80-M project

By Ronnel W. Domingo

PORO Point Management Corp. said it had started a P79.7-million package of projects that was seen to enhance the development of the seaside area in La Union as a tourism, recreational and commercial zone.

PPMC is a subsidiary of the Bases Conversion Development Authority in charge of making Poro Point an attractive site for investors and tourists.

PPMC president Juanito Antonio said the project was in line with the BCDA's thrust to position Poro Point as the gateway to Northern Luzon.

Antonio said the package included a P65.5-million road network project, that covered a 4.2-kilometer concrete pavement and 1.4-km gravel-based internal road.

Another project is the P11.5-million San Fernando Coral Promenade, a newly completed 250-meter seafront walkway for tourists.

He said the walkway was "punctuated with gazebos and ancillary structures that provide a panoramic view of the South China Sea and white sand beach of La Union."

Antonio said the third project involved the acquisition of a P2.7-million weather facility that would enhance the operational safety of the San Fernando Airport.

He said the weather facility was part of the on-going rehabilitation of the airport in compliance with the standards of the International Civil Aviation Organization.

The San Fernando Airport is considered by the Air Transportation Office as a secondary airport serving as an alternate to the Loakan Airport in Baguio City.

Navy names adviser for Fort Boni project

THE PHILIPPINE Navy has appointed the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) as its financial and project adviser for the conversion of a 44.7-hectare property in Fort Bonifacio into mixed commercial and residential enclave.

Navy chief vice admiral Ernesto de Leon earlier said the P9.5-billion development project was scheduled to break ground this year.

De Leon said DBP would present to the Navy the best options for the financing of the project and the development of the property. The bank will also assist the Navy in evaluating proposals from prospective property developers.

The DBP will also help ensure that the process of converting the Navy asset will adhere to the highest standards of transparency, De Leon added.

The property hosts the Navy's 18-hole golf course.

De Leon said the Navy was giving up the golf course in exchange for decent on-base housing for its officers and enlisted men. He said the project aims to put up some 4,000 residential units, of which 3,000 would be earmarked for enlisted men and 1,000 for Navy officers.

The project is expected to reduce the housing backlog within the Navy, De Leon said.

At least 12 hectares of the property will be set aside for the housing of Navy personnel and for retired Armed Forces officers who are part of the AFP Officers Village Association Inc.

De Leon said under the proposed development scheme, the prospective developer would be given 32 hectares for commercial development under a 99-year usufruct arrangement. The developer in turn would construct the housing requirements for the Navy personnel and the AFPOVAI members. The property would revert to the Navy after the usufruct period.

CJHDevco preparing for legal showdown

CAMP John Hay Development Corp. is getting ready for a legal battle in the event the government pursues its plan to bring new investor in Camp John Hay.

"We are ready to take the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) to court once it mounts an illegal takeover that will pave the way for a new developer. If BCDA thinks it can ease out CJHDevco just like that, it's wrong. We have infused P4 billion in investments in John Hay, generated jobs and income not only for our employers, but also for the local tourism industry. We are ready for a legal showdown," said Gina Alvarez, legal and corporate services head of CJHDevco, in a statement.

"The lease agreement signed with BCDA in 1996 and the succeeding memoranda of agreement are still in full force and in effect. Thus, BCDA could just dream on about bringing in a new developer," Alvarez added.

CJHDevco dismissed as "cheap sales ploy" BCDA's announcements about attracting prospective operators with new incentive packages.

"If the government through BCDA cannot make good on its promise to the current developer of a 5-percent tax on gross income earned in lieu of all taxes, what more for tax holidays, rewards and other benefits for newcomers allegedly superior even to the Subic Special Economic Zone," the company said in a statement.

BCDA was reported to have offered Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza) incentives, which are deemed more attractive than current investor come-ons under the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority package. The incentives include income tax holidays from four to six years, rewards under the Build-Operate-Transfer law, and government support for financial development assistance and other sources of financing.

Alvarez said the idea of seeking Peza accreditation as temporary solution to the problems caused by the Supreme Court Decision was a CJHDevco proposal as early as July 15, 2004.

"Instead of solving the problem it got its original investor into, BCDA is dangling the solution presented by CJHDevco as a come-on to a new developer," Alvarez added.

BCDA claimed a few have shown interest to manage John Hay.

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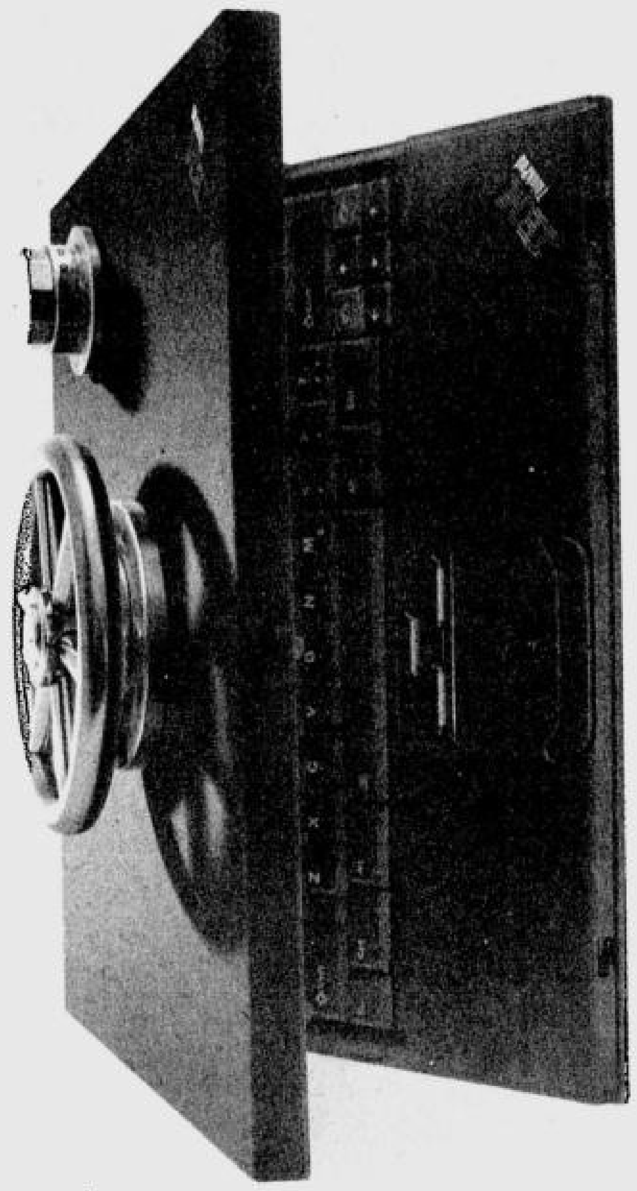

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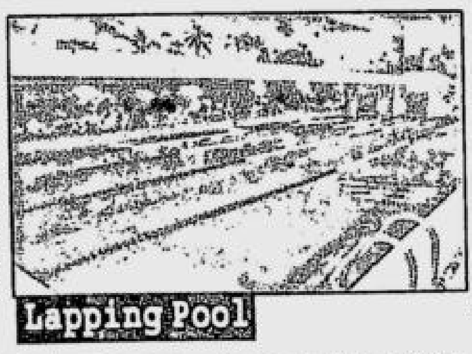

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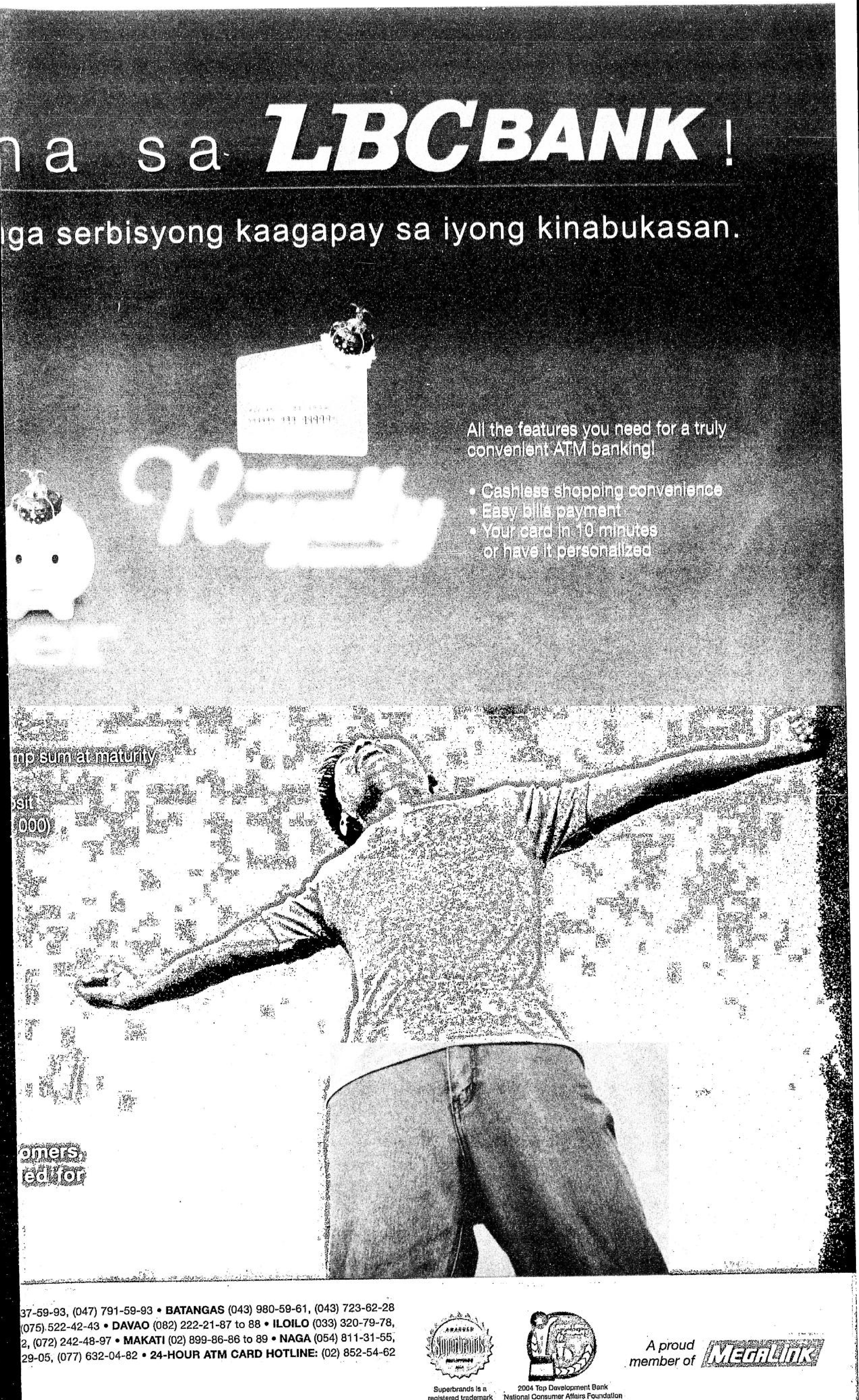

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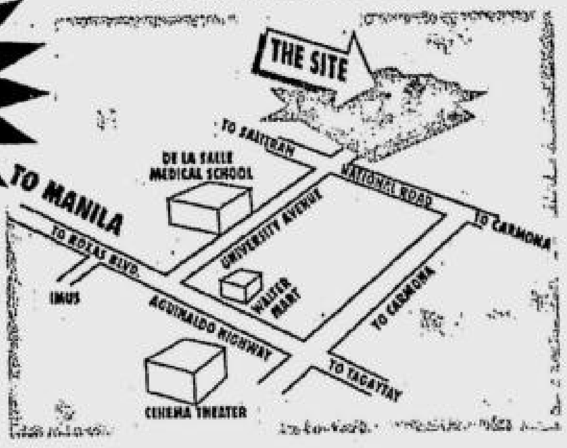

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100sqm	P 100,878.32
111sqm	P 139,968.67
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Debriefing the VAT law

By Paul R. Cooper

(1st of a series)

ALMOST 10 months after her State of the Nation Address that indicated that the value-added tax (VAT) law would be repealed, the President signed into law a bill that would likely raise the the VAT rate to 12 percent starting 2006.

The law also makes some fairly wholesale changes to the VAT and other aspects of the tax system, including a "temporary" increase in the corporate rate from 32 percent to 35 percent, and the reduction of several petroleum-related excise taxes.

Whether you believe it is a good or bad law will depend on your perspective; and whether you can see beyond the misinformation that exists about VAT. My own assessment is that the law is reasonably acceptable, except for one feature—an effective 3-percent minimum VAT that threatens to destroy the very foundation of the VAT system.

Ultimately though, the measure is another example of the damage that can be caused when law-drafting is left to the political process. If your car breaks down, you go to a professional to have it fixed. Yet for something more important than a car—the nation's tax laws governing revenue collections—draft amendments are tabled on the floor of the House and Senate and in the bicameral process, often without proper scrutiny by technicians, or a full appreciation of the mechanics of the system that the proponent is trying to amend.

Outline

This is the first of six articles dealing with various aspects of the VAT bill. The fundamental message is the same throughout—the current legislative system is not effective in enacting good tax laws:

The first article frames the policy issues, so it is easier to understand where legislators got it right or went astray in the VAT bill. This article looks at what a tax system should be trying to achieve, and how the VAT system fits in with this objective.

The second and third articles shift to the vagaries of the legislative process, the provisions where political trade-offs have resulted in vague drafting that will cost the government money and cause taxpayer confusion.

Ultimately, a tough question must be asked. Can an effective and transparent process be established to enable effective tax laws to be passed despite politics, or is the legislative process beyond salvage?

The second to the fourth articles examine problems introduced by the drafting of new rules in the VAT bill, when political trade-offs occurred. Almost invariably, the problems can be traced to the bicameral conference, when discussions are off-the-record and concessions are traded to ensure the bill will pass:

- Art. 2 considers the effective 3-percent minimum VAT—a potent provision that no legislator saw fit to mention in any of the updates given to media on the progress of the bill, yet it undermines the fundamentals of the VAT system.
- Art. 3 deals with several issues in the VAT bill; fairly non-controversial, but they highlight how much purchase lobbyists can obtain when the policy behind tax initiatives is non-transparent and so easily misunderstood.
- Art. 4 looks at two rules that may ultimately prove embarrassing to the government: a special withholding VAT rule that should result in the government paying more than private firms for goods and services, and a standby authority for increasing the VAT rate when the drafting makes it unclear when it may apply.

The fifth installment of this series focuses on the administrative side of the VAT. The new invoicing rules that take effect on Jan. 1, 2006, new registration rules and a requirement for the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) to issue consolidated VAT regulations by June 30, 2005 create an opportunity for the BIR to develop a strategy to leverage the rules through an effective taxpayer education campaign to reduce evasion. The risk is the BIR may slip up, further reducing taxpayer confidence and willingness to comply voluntarily with tax laws.

Art. 6 then asks the tough question the preceding articles have been building up. Can an effective and transparent process be established to enable coherent tax laws to be passed despite politics, or is the legislative process beyond salvage? The answer is "maybe" ... if the Congressional Oversight Committee provided for in 1997 under RA 8424 is convened and properly harnessed.

VAT is not a transaction tax

Ideally, a tax system would raise revenues for the government in a manner that does not distort the way people conduct business. For example, the documentary stamp tax (DST) should be repealed, or at least significantly curtailed. It raises P18 billion per year. However, as a tax on specific transactions, the real cost to business is far higher. Transactions are either deterred altogether, or pushed underground. The solution: repeal DST; encourage greater economic activity; recover the revenues through income tax on an expanded economic base.

Another example is the 20-percent withholding tax on interest paid to foreign lenders. Do not be fooled into believing the foreign lender incurs the cost. If the global interest rate is 8 percent and the lender is tax-free in its home jurisdiction, the Philippines will have to pay 10-percent interest because the government has chosen to tax the transaction (the interest payment), rather than the income. The result: interest rates are higher; less investment and economic activity is likely to occur.

The beauty of the value-added tax (VAT) is that it can raise significant revenues for the government. If VAT is implemented in the best fashion (single rate, minimal exemptions), it affects all prices in the same way, so it should not distort the process and the economic decision-making by businesses.

The VAT is not a transaction tax, at least, it is not meant to be. The objective is to tax consumers. Individuals are subject to income tax when they earn their income, and VAT when they spend their income. Taxing the transaction is merely a mechanism to collect the VAT.

The key difference between VAT, and the DST and withholding tax on interest is that the VAT uses an "input-output" model, which allows a credit for the VAT paid on a business' inputs.

Thus, in Diagram 1, the person who buys from the retailer will pay P17 VAT at a 10-percent rate. However, the retailer accounts for only P4 of this VAT to the BIR; the remainder is collected from the importer, who pays P10 VAT to Customs when the goods are imported, and an additional P3 to the BIR on the mark-up when the goods are sold to the retailer.

The VAT should provide an effective way for the government to collect revenues without affecting the way businesses behave. If a tax is imposed only on luxury products, they become relatively more expensive, and consumers are encouraged to switch their spending to other products. However, if a flat tax is imposed uniformly on consumption, there should be no effect on relative prices, although one can expect a reduction in general consumption (the "income effect").

Minimize exemptions

To create a VAT with few distortions, exemptions should be minimized. The problem here is that exemptions are political. It sounds great to tell consumers that certain products are VAT exempt, but this is only half the story. The real issue is that when we talk of a VAT exemption, it is not the product itself that is made VAT-exempt but only the specific transaction. One consequence is that if the exempt transaction is part-way through a supply chain, it means you could end up paying far more than 10 percent when you buy the final product, as Diagram 2 illustrates.

This is referred to as "cascading" taxes. In principle, the consumer should pay 10 percent VAT (P18.00). In effect, the VAT component is 14.9 percent (P28.00). The reason is that when the importer makes a VAT-exempt sale, he is not entitled to recover the VAT paid on his inputs. Consequently, they become an additional input cost, which will be factored into the price sold for his output.

In practice, cascading taxes are likely to be more subtle. Petroleum companies have been incurring VAT on some inputs but making VAT exempt sales.

Businesses then use petroleum as an intermediary input to make sales that are subject to VAT. If 20 percent of the inputs of petroleum companies are subject to VAT, and petroleum accounts for 5 percent of the inputs into a taxpayer's business, the business is effectively incurring 1 percent irrecoverable VAT on its inputs; not a huge amount, but an extra cost to consumers nonetheless. *(To be continued)*

(The author is a tax expert and director of PricewaterhouseCoopers)

Diagram 1

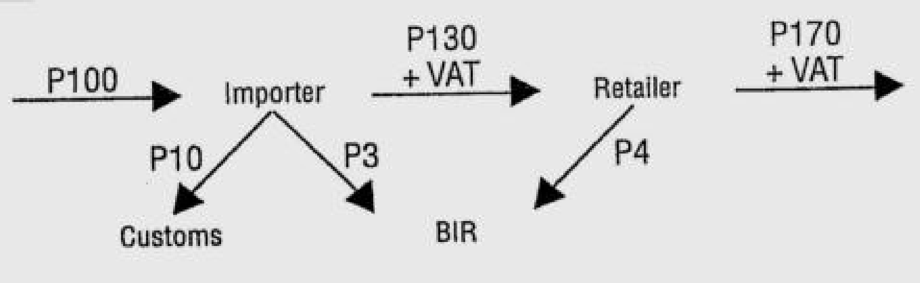
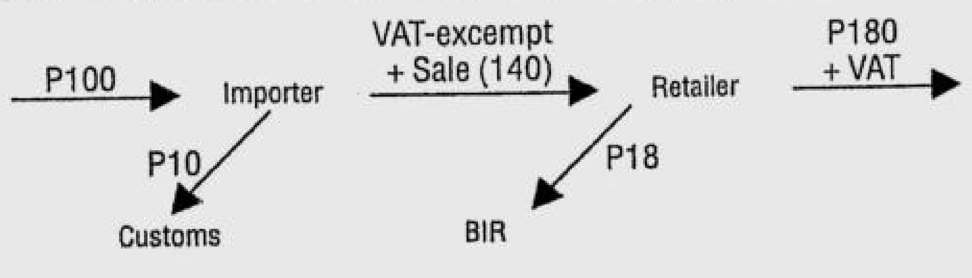


Diagram 2



PRIVATIZATION EFFORT

Gov't may earn ₱1B from sale of state assets in '05

By Michelle V. Remo

BENT on raising more revenues, the national government aims to generate about P1 billion this year from the sale of state assets.

Jose Vicente Bengzon III, newly appointed chief privatization officer of the Privatization and Management office, said the agency had set a list of government assets that it intends to privatize within the year.

He said these assets include the Radio Philippines Network (RPN Channel 9), the Philippine Postal Corp., Philippine Al-Amanah Bank and a 5-hectare idle land in Makati.

Earlier, Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima said the government also would like to sell its shares in the Philippine National Bank within the year.

"We are hoping to double what we generated last year," Bengzon said.

In 2004, the government was able to generate P501 million from privatization. Last year's privatization proceeds, however, was a huge 69-percent drop from the P1.28 billion recorded in 2003.

The Philippine Al-Amanah Bank is the first and only Muslim bank in the country, while the 5-hectare lot in Makati City is where the International School was formerly situated.

The government had bid out the lot in the past, but no deal had been made.

The government's shares in PNB, which it jointly owns with the Lucio Tan group, will be sold on or before September this year.

The government and the Lucio Tan group jointly own 90 percent of PNB shares, while the remaining 10-percent are publicly listed.

The government said there are already parties that have expressed interest in buying the PNB shares, but it added that the Lucio Tan group could also exercise its right to buy the government's shares to become majority owner of PNB.

Bengzon earlier said that the PMO is scouting for a financial adviser to help the government in selling off RPN-9.

Opening of bids for those interested to become the government's financial adviser would be on June 27.

The financial adviser would be tasked with appraising the physical assets of RPN-9, and come up with a valuation of its operations, he said.

Bengzon said the listed assets would be best left in the hands of the private sector, as investors could improve their operations.

He added that the government would be using the proceeds to increase its budget for much-needed infrastructure projects. The Philippine government's spending for infrastructure, at about 3 percent of its gross domestic product, is one of the lowest in this part of the world.

The government hopes to increase its spending for infrastructure as a means of enticing more investors to place their money in the Philippines.

3 firms get DOE approval to develop coal resources

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT of Energy recently awarded four coal operating contracts to three local firms for the exploration and development of coal resources in Southern Luzon, Cebu and Mindanao.

This brought to 10 the total number of contracts signed this year, the DOE said in a statement.

The contracts were awarded to SKI Construction Group Inc. (formerly Summa Kumagai Inc.), Rock Energy International Corp., and Bonanza Energy Resources Inc.

SKI Construction got two exploration contracts for coal sites in Barangay Alpako, Naga and in Danao City, both in Cebu.

Rock Energy was given the right to explore and develop coal resources in three blocks located in Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte. The covered area is approximately 3,000 hectares.

Bonanza Energy was awarded a contract for eight blocks of coal areas in Sultan Kudarat, South Cotobato and Sarangani, all in Mindanao.

Earlier in the year, the DOE awarded coal operating contracts to MG Mining and Energy Corp. for areas in South Cotabato and Southern Cebu, Forum Exploration Inc. for coal fields in Balamban-Naga and Dalaguete in Cebu, Philex Mining Corp. for Diplahan-Buug in Zamboanga Sibugay and Samaju Corp. for Batan Island in Rapurapu, Albay.

According to government estimates, the country's total coal reserves came up to 343.4 million metric tons (MMT).

Last year, local coal production reached an all-time high of 2.72 MMT, 34.3 percent higher than the 2.03 MMT produced in 2003.

In 2002, local coal production only reached 1.66 MMT.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla expressed optimism that the surge in interest in local coal exploration and development would increase the production of local coal and boost the country's efforts to achieve 60-percent energy self-sufficiency by 2010.

"We hope that these exploration activities will ... lessen our dependence on imported fuel and yield [foreign exchange] savings," he said.

Lotilla added that while demand for local coal had steadily gone up these past months, most of the country's coal still came from abroad, mostly from China.

For this year, market supply from coal production and importation is seen to hit 8.03 MMT. Of this forecast amount, some 2.55 MMT is expected to come from local coal production.

Power and other industrial sectors are the country's biggest coal users, with the power sector accounting for around 80 percent of total coal demand.

WARNING TO THE PUBLIC
>>>>>>>

The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) warns the public to be vigilant of unscrupulous individuals who are using fake PAGCOR documents to swindle unwitting suppliers. PAGCOR received reports that these offenders have been issuing counterfeit purchase orders and checks to various companies and have managed to illegally acquire hundreds of thousands of pesos worth of goods. We remind the public to conduct all transactions only at the PAGCOR Corporate Office and only with duly-authorized PAGCOR personnel.

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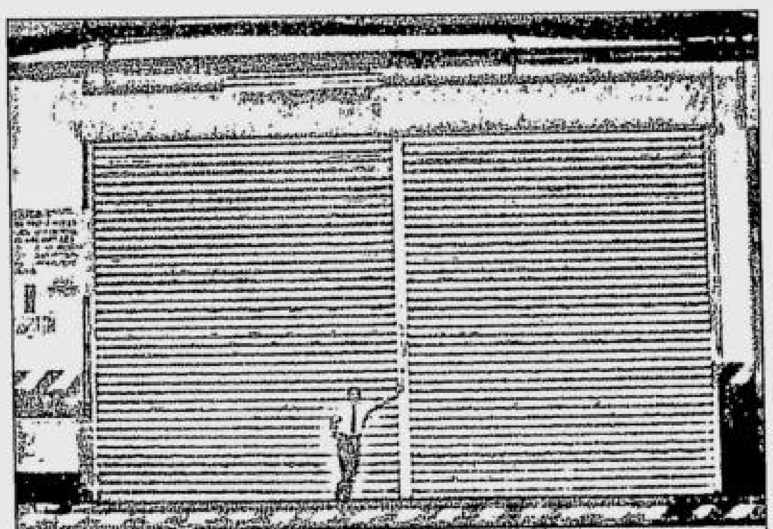

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Business community geared for 'Corporate World 2005'

THE BUSINESS community is getting ready for a unique two-in-one event that will gather corporate players, executives, employees, professionals and entrepreneurs at the World Trade Center Metro Manila from July 14 to 16.

Dubbed "Corporate World 2005," the event will put together the much-anticipated "Corporate Giveaways", the country's longest-running buyers' show on business gifts, premiums, promotional ideas, advertising specialties and merchandising incentives; and a complementary show "Corporate Solutions", the second trade show on marketing support services, business solutions, office equipment, furniture, interiors, and supplies.

"These make Corporate World 2005 a grand and graceful mix of the 18th Corporate Giveaways and the 2nd Corporate Solutions," said Lynn Z. Romero, president of Worldexco, the event organizer.

"Joining Corporate World 2005 is thus a sure-fire way to make client-sourcing easy for corporate players who are guaranteed to come face to face with thousands of top-level executives and decision makers, from government and private firms to entrepreneurs and professionals," Romero said.

"The exhibitors will also get additional mileage from the entrepreneur-based audience of Franchise Expo 2005, which will overlap with Corporate World 2005 in the same venue," Romero added. "Franchise Expo attracted over 15,000 visitors last year."

Other details on Corporate World 2005 can be obtained from Worldexco at 834-7408, 891-8638, 834-7503; or e-mail mktg@worldexco.com.

In combining Corporate Giveaways and Corporate Solutions under Corporate World 2005, the exhibitors will now have an even bigger audience of World Trade Center visitors who can also view a wider range of products and services for their offices or businesses, or for their professional and personal needs.

The Corporate Giveaways alone has become a one-stop trade destination for over 100,000 buyers through all of its 18 years.

"Thus, Corporate World 2005 offers not only products and services, but also business opportunities, marketing tie-ups, long-term supply contracts, and important industry connections, among many others," Romero said.

"Corporate World 2005 is designed to become an effective non-traditional marketing tool and a vital medium for direct interaction between buyers and sellers, and among members and sectors of the industry, locally and internationally, all under one roof," Romero added.

CALTEX DRAWS WINNERS

Caltex lubricant product category manager for Havoline Paul Familara, together with DTI representative Victoria B. Babaran and Beyond Marketing Corp president Ric Beldua, led the draw of the lucky winners of the 'Xpress Lube Xtra Rewards' held recently at the Beyond Marketing Corp compound. Jefferson R. Custodio won the grand prize of a trip for 2 to Boracay. Second placer Randy Lopez of Caloocan bagged a Samsung E600, while third placer John Marcus B. Rualizo got a pioneer Car Audio System. Raffle entries came from 57 Caltex Xpress Lube Centers from all over the country. Minor prizes like Havoline shirt jacks, Delo coffee mugs, Xpress Lube back packs, Havoline racing caps, Havoline overnight bags and Delo Sports shirts were also given away.

Enter the Westgate!

JUST when you can't get over the feeling of being over "boxed-in" and when every geographical corner you turn to you see malls mushrooming in sight-it's called mall sickness! During these times we seem to dare ourselves to feel, relax, live and think outside the malls. Free yourself from the encroachment of mall settings and enjoy a mainstreet ambience conducive to leisure walks and lifestyle retail setting.

Westgate Center, located in the sprawling Filinvest Corporate City in Alabang, is a masterplanned commercial and lifestyle complex that's fast becoming the retail, dining and wellness destination of the south. One of Westgate Center's major attractions is its strategic location. While tucked within the burgeoning business district of Filinvest, Alabang, Westgate Center has low-level air and noise pollution and has become an alternative recreation venue amidst a park-like environment.

Westgate Center boasts of an exciting and dynamic mix of tenants offering entertainment, dining and wining, fashion, automotive, fitness and wellness, as well as other specialty and service shops that cater to the need of every discerning customer who seeks out all lifestyle possibilities they can find. Westgate Center's spacious sidewalks can be a perfect setting for street parties, outdoor events and hang-outs.

For people who look for their distinct tastes and settings, Westgate Center has always something for everyone-all in one unique setting. For food, there are cafes and bars such as Go Nuts Donuts, Brothers Burger, Cafe Breton, Cafe Adriatico, Lanai Red Lounge Bar, Congo Grill, Poquito Mas, and Koreana Restaurant; For health and fitness, there's Acqua Hair Salon, Tips and Toes Nail Salon, Dental Suites, Fitness First, and Belo Medical Group. There are specialty shops such as Orientique Furniture and Purple Closet; and PriceSmart; For auto centers, there's Minerva Tyre Gallery, GM Chevrolet, Cargard Motors, Auto Craze, Denso/Riteserv Diesel Center, Mazda Alabang and Nissan Westgate. Other services here include Total Gas Station, East West Bank, and Gymboree Play & Music. Soon to open are UCC Coffee, Wine Depot, MCA Luna Gallery and Westgate Alabang Home Depot.

Westgate Center, Filinvest Alabang is indeed fast becoming the "center of attention and lifestyle" of the south, and its landscape transcends sophistication and upscale trends to cater to self-image, lifestyle aspirations and the individuality of patrons and customers-all these in an open-air milieu of fun, vibrance, excitement and dynamism. Go south and experience the Westgate!

FIRST LIFE MANAGERS TAKE HOME INTERNATIONAL AWARD

First Guarantee Life Assurance Company Inc (First Life) agency managers Josie T. Gotohio, LUTCF (right) and Lourdes T. Yao, LUTCF (left) receive their International Management Award (IMA) and Career Development Award (CDA), respectively, from Gama International president Robert H. Baccigalupi, CLU, ChFC, CLTCF in the recent Gama International Management recognition night at the LAMP Annual Meeting in Georgia, Atlanta. The General Agents and Managers Association (Gama), worldwide organization of life insurance professionals, provides its members access to prestigious recognition awards. The IMA and CDA are given to agency leaders who exemplify excellence in the distribution of financial services with its qualification based on commission level.

COKE JOINS F&B MANUTECH EXPO

Now on its 7th year, the Food and Beverage Manufacturing and Technologies Expo (F&B ManuTech) is set for June 22 to 24 at the PICC Forum, Manila. Organized by the Training Institute of Manila Engineers (Time) Foundation, in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Tourism and the Philippine Food Processors and Exporters Organization (Philfoodex), the event aims to promote growth and development in the F&B community. Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc (CCBPI) has once again signed up with the expo. Shown during the signing of the memorandum of agreement are (from left) CCBPI national trade and promotions manager Roberto C. Saavedra; project director Mayose Bautista; San Miguel Corp corporate sales director Pablo P. Pacquing and corporate sales services group manager Archie B. Gupalon. The event is expected to draw more than 20,000 visitors. For more information on the F&B ManuTech Expo, Cut Unlimited may be reached through 687-0654, 687-0604, or e-mail cut@pacific.net.ph. Log on to www.foodandbeverage-manutech.com.

ROTARY CLUB INDUCTS OFFICERS

The Rotary Club of Panday Pira held its 28th charter anniversary and induction of officers June 4 at the Mindanao Ballroom of the Westin Philippine Plaza. Shown are the newly inducted officers of the Rotary Club.

ABC teams up with ESPN Star Sports

IN A BID to define and establish its place in the fiercely competitive local TV arena, the Cojuangco-owned Associated Broadcasting Company (ABC), which currently ranks third behind GMA and ABS-CBN, is looking to sports to develop its own loyal core of viewers and pump prime its drive for higher sales revenues.

Explaining the move, ABC's management acknowledged that sports has become integral to the interests and lifestyle of today's health conscious generation. Aside from that, ABC executive vice president and COO Reggie D. Galura said that sports "is big business, selling equipment, apparel, footwear, and what have you. It attracts millions worth in sponsorships and advertising money. It pays millions to star athlete endorsers and image models." With the natural excitement and glamour attached to sports, Galura further observed that it attracts millions of TV viewers and that there's definitely room for a local free-to-air TV station that would devote substantial primetime hours to sports.

To reinforce its sports programming (ABC is the carrier of the PBA), the network has entered into a syndication agreement with Asia's number one sports broadcaster and provider ESPN Star Sports, which is on a campaign to broaden its distribution and coverage across the Asian region where it now has 13 networks. The deal gives Philippine viewers access to some of the world's top international and regional sporting events, including the most comprehensive snooker coverage available plus the LPGA Tours and PGA championships. It is ABC's cue ball-if you want to talk snooker, or approach shot, if you prefer golf parlance-to the big block of predominantly male, affluent, educated viewers between the ages of 15 to 54 that form the core of ESPN Star Sports viewers.

Through its partnership with ESPN Star Sports, ABC will deliver to Philippine audiences this year over 350 hours of the most awaited and most watched sports events in the world calendar as ESPN Star Sports covers them where they happen, when they happen-from among others-George in South Africa, Oahu in Hawaii, Michoacan in Mexico to Superstition Mountain in Arizona, Nova Scotia in Canada, Evian-les-Bains in France and North Korea, Jakarta, Singapore and Manila in Asia.

ESPN Star Sports delivers this vast array of international and regional sports into the homes of Asian viewers via its encrypted pay and free to air services. ESPN Star Sports' top quality programming and world-class presentation emanates from the company's 60,000 square-foot state-of-the-art production facilities and earth station in Singapore and are distributed to 128 million households across Asia for ESPN and over 54 million households for Star Sports.

"ESPN Star Sports on ABC", a Monday-to-Friday strip aired at 11 p.m. after the public affairs programs, kicks off from June 7 to 10 with the telecast of the "Shoprite LPGA Classic" held a few days earlier (June 3 to 5) at the Seaview Marriott Resort & Spa Bay course in Galloway Township, New Jersey. The Shoprite LPGA Classic, which began in 1986 carries a purse of $1,400,000 and has a 54-hole format.

Favored to win is 2004 defending champion, the diminutive 5'3½" 28-year-old blonde blue-eyed beauty Cristie Kerr, a native of Miami, Florida. She is spokesperson for Evelyn Lauder's Breast Cancer Research Foundation an advocacy she took up when her mothe was afflicted with the disease. She has fou LPGA victories tucked in her belt.

Clips

Eastwood nominated to ILO post

EXPERIENCED envoy Ma. Veronica Aguiluz-Eastwood was unanimously nominated recently by the Japanese and Jordan governments, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and Department of Labor (DOLE) and other member states to the prestigious post of Asian Pacific Group Coordinator for the International Labor Organization. Eastwood was also chosen by the current coordinator Masahiko Hayashi to replace her. Other member states that have voting rights also signified their intent to elect her in the coming 2005 ILO Conference in Geneva, Switzerland. Her stint in various vital positions includes being chair of the ILO Governing Body Committee Meeting on Sectoral and Technical Meetings and Related Issues held in Geneva March 14, and being vice chair for the Government Group of the ILO Tripartite Meeting on Employment, Social Dialogue, Rights at Work and Industrial Relations in Transport Manufacture held Jan. 10 to 12. Eastwood is currently the Labor Attache to the United Nations. The members states' electoral college will vote today during the 2005 International Labor Conference in Geneva.

ARBs in int'l markets

PRODUCTS manufactured by agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) may soon find their way into international markets. Matching their products with the right markets is key to helping them, according to Land Reform Sec. Rene Villa. "Market matching is what it's all about," said Villa, as he endorsed the Agraryo Trade Fair (ATF) slated from June 8 to 12 at the Megatrade Hall in SM Megamall. ATF is a 5-day event that showcases hundreds of food, and non-food products manufactured by ARBs and ARCs. The Department of Land Reform, together with its corporate arm, the National Agribusiness Corp (Nabcor), will share their "knowledge of new markets and the dynamics of marketing."

Newsletter for overseas Pinoys

IN COMMEMORATION of Migrant Workers Day on June 7, a former overseas Filipino worker (OFW) is launching a newsletter for overseas Filipinos (OFWs, immigrants, permanent residents abroad, seamen, etc). Global Pinoy, a 20-page large-format quarterly publication will be distributed free to departing kababayans at all Naia terminals. Copies will also be given out at the DFA and POEA. Copies will also be distributed at selected areas within Metro Manila. Global Pinoy, printed by UST Publishing House, was conceptualized and designed, edited and published by 1990 POEA Bagong Bayani awardee Rhoel Raymundo Mendoza, publication designer/writer who once worked as in-house graphic designer of the Saudi Basic Industries Corp (Sabic) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. For inquiries about the newsletter, text 0918-3948246, or e-mail globalpinoy@trilsys.com.

Free Samsung TV from HSBC

MOVIE nights will never be the same again as HSBC, the world's local bank, launches its promo "Unbelievable Gold Promo" that gives every new HSBC Gold Visa cardholder a Samsung Flat Screen TV. New applicants get a free 17" Samsung Flat Screen TV when they apply for an HSBC Gold Vise Card, while current HSBC Gold cardholders can upgrade to a 21-inch, 25-inch, or a 29-inch TV on HSBC's 0-percent interest installment plan for a minimal fee. No raffle, no hassle. Samsung Flat Screen TVs offer excellent visual pleasure with an AV multi-system that allows for DVD component input, MTS stereo/SAP, an astounding turbo plus sound system, and Digital Noise Reduction. HSBC's "Unbelievable Gold Promo" runs until June 30. For more information, call 878-7878, or log on to www.hsbc.com.ph.

DOT expects a million Japanese tourists by '08

By Clarissa S. Batino

DURANO

OSAKA, Japan—The Philippines aims to bring in about a million Japanese tourists to its premium resort islands by 2008 by waging a strong marketing campaign to revive the interests of Japanese travelers, according to Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano.

The tourism chief said that with the country's aggressive marketing efforts, tourist arrivals in the Philippines may hit 3 million this year as against 2.29 million in 2004.

Japan accounted for about 17 percent of last year's total arrivals. Except in 2004, tourism growth for several years now had been poor if not dismal.

"Last year's 18-percent growth in Japanese arrivals is the highest in 20 years," Durano told participants of a Philippine tourism and investment roadshow here. "But there is much room for improvement this year."

Durano heads a Philippine Business Conference in Japan's three major cities—Osaka, Nagoya and Tokyo—from June 1 to June 10.

The business conference, one of the largest missions of late, hopes to persuade Japan to prioritize the Philippines over other Asian destinations in terms of tourism and investments.

Durano said in Cebu alone, two opportunities were open for tourism investments.

Many similar projects are also available in the Calabarzon area, Negros Occidental, Davao, among others, he added.

Domingo Siazon, the Philippines ambassador to Japan, said that tourism was becoming an important pillar of the country's economy.

Aside from the billions of dollars generated from receipts, jobs are being created, Siazon said.

"We hope Japan would explore joint ventures, especially in tourism areas," said Durano, a former lawmaker from Cebu. "Cebu is ripe for the picking for hotel and resort investments."

In particular, available projects in Cebu are the South reclamation project, to be partially-funded by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, and the 50-hectare boardwalk in Mandaue City that is being developed by FF Cruz.

Cebu and Metro Manila are the major gateways being sold to Japanese tourists as the international airports in the two key cities handle direct flights to Japan.

Philippine Airlines said it has 31 flights a week from Manila and Cebu to five major points in Japan—Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, Fukuoka and Okinawa.

"We should see a million Japanese tourists by 2008, if not earlier," Durano told participants of a conference in Osaka last Friday. "This is achievable if we stay focused on our goal to sell the country using a strong brand image—that of a premium resort island."

To achieve his goal, Durano must increase the percentage of inbound Japanese travelers by more than 25 percent each year starting 2005.

As of the first quarter, however, growth from this market was only 7.8 percent against the 40 percent increase in South Korean visitors to the Philippines, and China's 105 percent.

Japan is the country's second largest source of tourists, next to the United States, and is becoming the country's biggest trading partner.

It is one of three major markets for Philippine tourism. China and South Korea are the other two.

Last year, a little over 382,000 Japanese visited the Philippines.

While this number was 18 percent higher compared to the previous year, it was less than 3 percent of the 16.8 million Japanese who went out of their country to travel.

This year, Japan projected outbound tourists at 17.4 million and at 20 million by 2008.

Durano said the Philippines would like to hit the 5-million tourist mark by 2010.

Selling the Philippines to Japanese travelers shouldn't be difficult, according to Durano.

First, the Philippines is nearer to Japan, compared to neighboring tourism destinations.

Second, the Philippines has one of the best natural attractions.

Third, the Filipinos are warm and hospitable.

Manila and Cebu are simply gateways to other attractions in the Philippines such as Palawan, Boracay, Bohol, Davao and even Subic and Clark.

"We would just use Manila and Cebu as baits," he said. "Once there, we would try to get them to visit other places."

He said that major hotels and resorts in Manila, Cebu and other key tourist spots, are building up their capacities to accommodate more tourists.

Durano said the DOT had been closely working with the Department of National Defense and the Philippine Navy to implement Task Force Stingray, a program meant to secure coastal and island resort destinations.

The tourism agency is also implementing the "Security for Tourism Operation Program" or STOP, which enhances disaster coordination and preparedness, especially among tourism stakeholders.

S. Korea urged to wrap up risk analysis of RP goods

By Ronnel W. Domingo

MEMBERS of a trade mission to South Korea have asked Seoul to wrap up the ongoing risk analysis on Philippine products in an effort to open up the East Asian peninsula to Philippine poultry exports.

Trade Secretary Juan B. Santos, who visited South Korea last week, said Seoul should readily accept RP poultry considering that the Philippines remained the only major exporter in Southeast Asia unaffected by the avian flu outbreak.

Santos represented the country during the Asia Pacific Economic Conference Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Trade (Apec MRT Meeting) held on June 2 to 3.

The official in a statement said that he met with leaders of the Korea Importers' Association (Koima) last Wednesday and sought the assistance of the group in calling for the speedy disposition of the import risk analysis process.

Koima is the largest importers' association in Korea, with over 13,000 members representing principals that include the Korean government, department store chains, discount store chains, wholesale stores, restaurants, hotels, airlines and Korea's manufacturing companies.

According to the DTI, Koima accounted for about 80 percent, or roughly $140 billion, of the total trade in the Korean economy in 2004.

Santos said the Koima leaders gave their assurance that they would exert the necessary effort to facilitate the Philippines' request.

The trade chief added that the group also committed to sending a buying mission to the Philippines.

Santos explained that the Korean Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry was going over matters related to the Philippines application to export poultry products to Korea.

He noted the huge potential of the Korean market. He added that in the early 1990s, Korea's global import of fresh and frozen chicken parts alone reached $93 million yearly.

"This figure however decreased by nearly 50 percent in 2004 due to sourcing constraints caused by the avian flu outbreak," he said.

The country's exports of poultry products reached about $2.9 million in 2004.

Export of fresh chilled chicken products accounted for about $597,764, while the remaining $2.3 million consisted of shipments of frozen chicken cut into parts.

Mango exporters hope to recover Q1 losses

By Christine A. Gaylican

PHILIPPINE mango exporters hope to recover some of the losses they incurred in the first quarter by complying with the strict trade protocols of Japan, one of the Philippines' biggest export markets.

Roberto C. Amores, Mango Product Exporters Confederation Inc. president, said in an interview that compliance to the guidelines set by Japan's Ministry of Health may help the industry recover, and deliver the mango requirements of that country. Japan needs 7,000 metric tons of fresh mangos annually.

Japan's Ministry of Health have cleared Philippine mango products, Amores said. The mangos have met Japan's standard for the maximum limit of Chlorpyrifos residue—an alleged cancer-causing pesticide banned in Japan.

"The [Philippine] government and private exporters ... negotiated with Japanese authorities regarding the pesticide residue level for Philippine mango exports," said Amores. "We have prevailed."

Japan, is the country's third largest market for fresh and processed mangoes. Trade with other new markets, such as the United States and Australia, also did not improve during the period, Amores said.

He said producers in Guimaras Island—the only place where export quality mangos are grown—did not increase production of the tropical fruit.

The Philippines has been delivering fresh mangoes to Japan, Hong Kong, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Switzerland and Belgium.

Sales of fresh mangoes have been sluggish in January to March, said Amores. Local exporters had to deal with smaller mangos whose growth had been stunted due to bad weather conditions in the country.

"The production areas in Central Luzon have not fully recovered from the impact of the typhoons in December, followed by the dry spell," Amores said told the INQUIRER.

According to the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics, mango production in the first quarter declined by 9 percent to 212.68 million metric tons from 234 metric tons recorded last year.

He said they have yet to finalize the actual volumes shipped during the period, but local exporters have not met the demand of traditional markets, including Hong Kong and China.

The Philippines is trying to overtake Mexico, which currently dominates the $200-million fresh mango trade with the US. The country has already gained a foothold in the $11-million mango trade market of Japan and Hong Kong's $25-million market.

Amores said that mango exporters have ironed out the quarantine issues with Chinese authorities.

Amores is optimistic that the local super mango variety will be snapped up in the Chinese market. He expects earnings to exceed $40 million in the coming years.

'Hot money' inflows soar to $1.8B in January-May

From page B3

"Strong first-quarter corporate earnings of select firms and profit prospects of many industries, the strengthening of the peso and the attractive initial public offerings of a number of companies such as Manila Water Co. and SM Investment Corp. also boosted investor interest during the period," Tetangco said.

The net inflows for the first three weeks of May, amounting to about $90 million, were actually lower than the levels in the first four months of the year.

The net inflows stood at $543.5 million in January, $334.7 million in February, $562.1 million in March and $279.8 million in April.

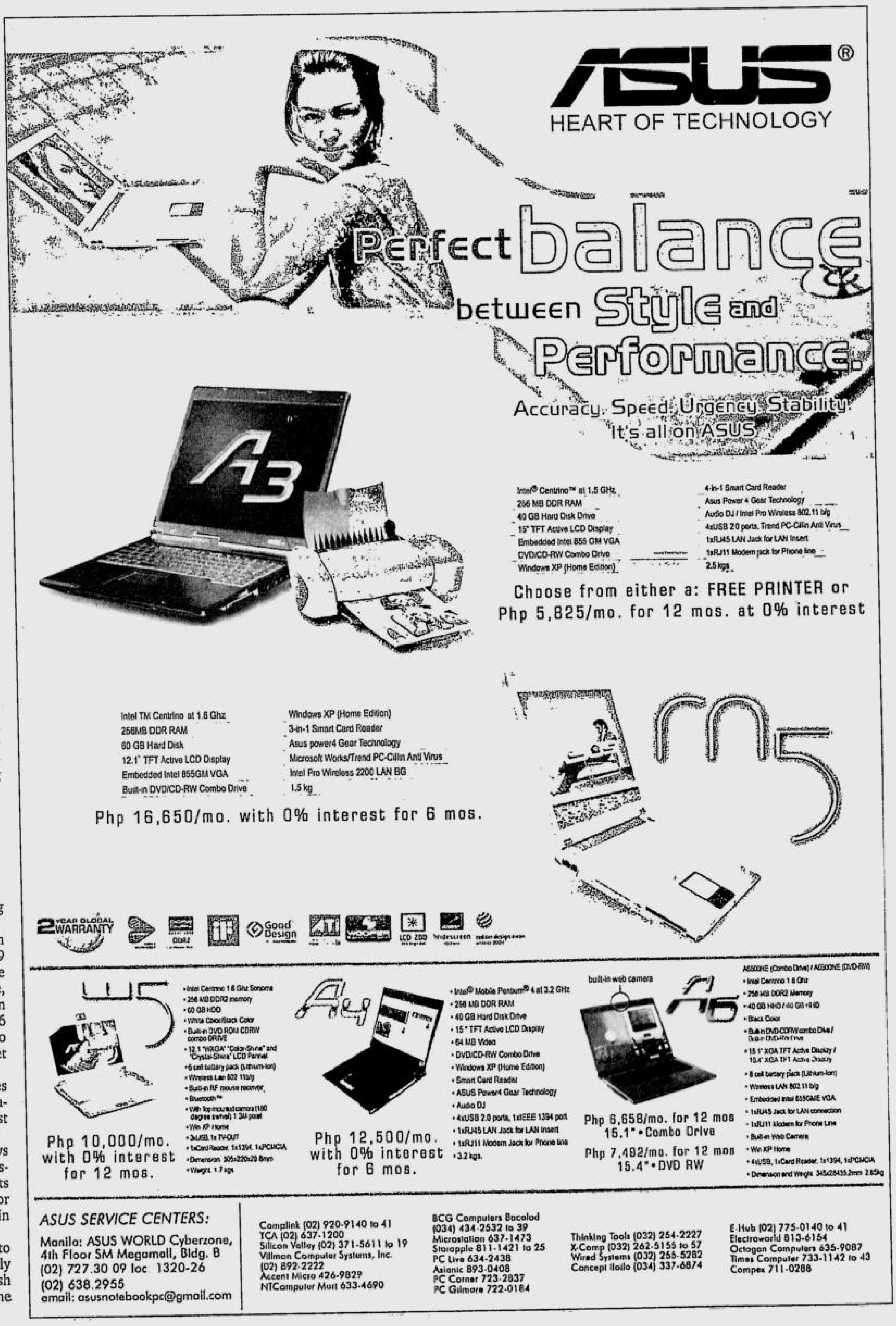
Tetangco said a total of $3.14 billion in foreign portfolio investments that were funded by new inward foreign exchange inflows was registered by the BSP during the period.

The inflows were broken down as follows: $2.12 billion or 69.9 percent in securities listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange, $934.2 million or 29.7 percent in government securities, and $21.6 million or 0.7 percent in peso bank deposits and money market instruments.

"The total is about 3.9 times the $813.6 million new registrations in the same period last year," Tetangco said.

On the other hand, outflows and capital repatriations of registered portfolio investments amounted to $1.38 billion or double the comparable figure in 2004.

Hot money inflows are seen to surge threefold this year to nearly $2 billion due to a more bullish investor sentiment, based on the BSP's estimates.



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THE FIRST Agja general meeting brought together the various stakeholders in the Philippine gaming community, including gaming journalists, online game publishers, Filipino game developers and enthusiasts.

Asian journalists' group pushes responsible gaming

By Erwin Lemuel Oliva
Contributor

THE GROWING gaming community in the country recently spawned the first Asian Gaming Journalists Association (Agja), an organization launched in the Philippines. The group held its first general meeting and eyeball party at Extreme Gaming Grounds in Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila on May 31.

Composed of more than 30 Filipino, Malaysian, and Singaporean journalists who write about the video game industry, Agja founder and president Joey Alarilla said the group was formed primarily to promote responsible gaming in the region.

"There has been a lot of negative talk about gaming. And we know that there is a need for us to address the misperception about gaming. Gaming is not being given the proper respect. [The situation is] similar to comic book writers; they were not getting respect before," Alarilla said, as he introduced the group, which is informally referred as Gamejournos. Agja is the first organization in the Philippines devoted to promoting gaming as a legitimate news beat.

While the group acknowledged that the abuse of games could have ill effects, Agja intends to promote the good side of gaming.

"When you abuse gaming, it leads to bad effects. But we should not close our minds to the positive aspects of gaming. In the US, the Federation of American Scientists is developing video games that teach students in different age groups concepts such as Babylonian mathematics and immunology. When we play games, we are willing to learn a lot of information just to beat the game. And we spend hours playing the game—which we otherwise might not be willing to spend reading a book," Alarilla added.

He also cited the book "Got Game" published by Harvard Business School Press, which talked about how the gamer generation is taking over the workplace, and how people learn real-world business skills like decision-making, leadership and risk-taking from playing video games.

"These are things that we know that we hope to share to others. Gaming is not just about monsters," he said.

Agja will be conducting school campus tours as part of an effort to promote responsible gaming among students soon. Code-named Campus ORG (Operation: Responsible Gaming), the campus tours are meant to educate students about the benefits of gaming while warning them against the harmful effects of gaming abuse. The tours are also meant to train the next generation of gaming journalists, by establishing a corps of campus gaming journalists in different schools.

The Agja launch brought together the stakeholders in the Philippine gaming industry, including publishers of localized massively multiplayer online games, Filipino game developers, and other guests from the local gaming community.

The guests who gave informal talks were Ricky Banaag, country manager of Intel Microelectronics Philippines; Greg Kittelson, director for business development of Digital Media Exchange, parent company of Mobius, the Philippine publisher of MU and Gunbound; Mike Hamlin, managing director of Team Asia; Sheila Paul, marketing head of Level Up!, the Philippine publisher of OZ World, Ragnarok, R.O.S.E. Online and RF On-

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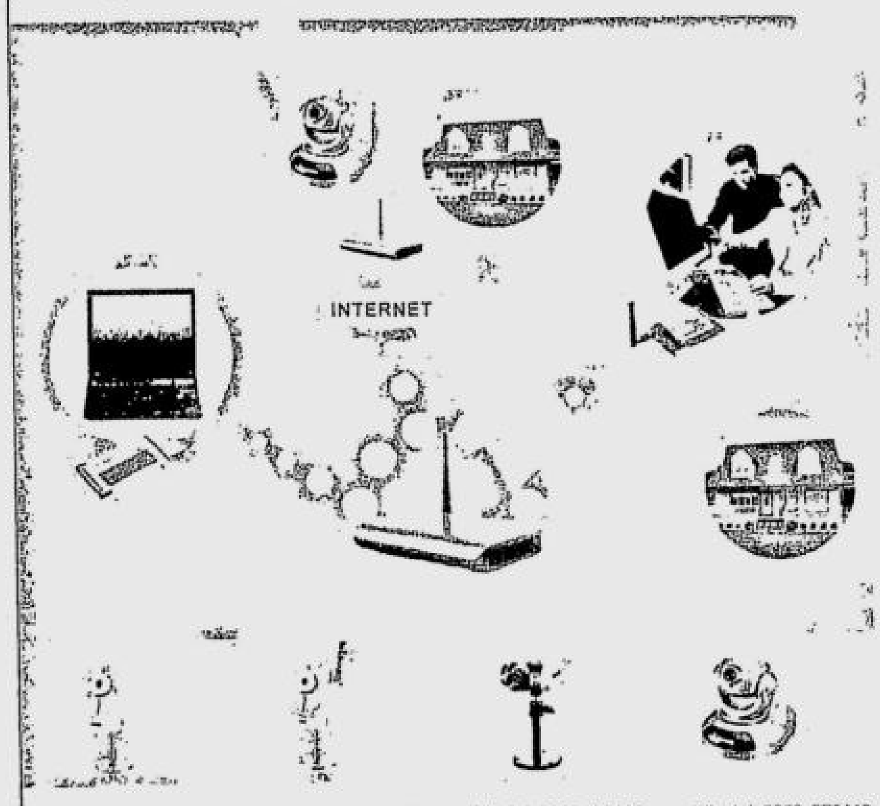

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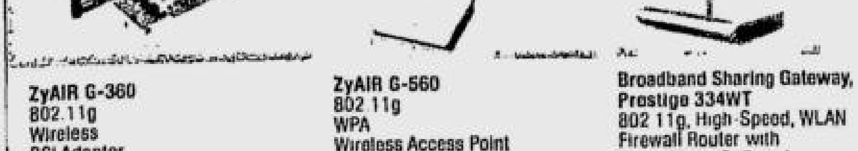

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RP game publisher seeks more cooperation vs 'private servers'

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva
INQ7.net

PHILIPPINE game publisher Mobius.ph has appealed to rival local game publishers to cooperate and join its ongoing battle against groups and individuals running so-called "private servers," an illegal operation of online games.

Despite numerous raids conducted with local enforcement agencies over the past few months, local game publishers Level Up! and Mobius.ph acknowledged that they are still struggling against the proliferation of illegal operations of its online games.

Both companies are exclusive distributors of South Korean-developed games in the Philippines. Level Up! is the exclusive operator and distributor of Philippine Ragnarok Online, while Mobius.ph runs MU Online and Gunbound.

"Actually we don't know the extent of these private server problems in the country. But we know that all online games are now competing with these private servers. I hope there will be a day when we all online games can cooperate and fight them," said Gregory Kittelson, director for business development of Digital Media Exchange (parent firm of Mobius.ph) and product manager for Gunbound Philippines, during the launch of the Asian Gaming Journalists Association on May 31 at Extreme Gaming Grounds in Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila.

Level Up!, for its part, said it has temporarily halted its raids against private servers in Metro Manila.

"There have been no recent raids. But we're still compiling a list of private servers run by people," said Sheila Paul, marketing head of Level Up! Paul was also a guest speaker at the Agja launch.

South Korean game developer Webzen this year shut down the largest illegal operation of MU Online in the Philippines.

However, amid this aggressive campaign against illegal operators of its game, the South Korean game developer has also sought help from stakeholders in the Philippine gaming industry to create standard policies against such practices in the country.

Salvador Belaro Jr., legal counsel for Webzen, has said previously that the South Korean firm was working with local telephone companies and Internet service providers to help them develop standard policies against "international private servers."

Since online gaming is an emerging industry in the Philippines, Belaro said intellectual property rights of online game developers were increasingly being violated by private server operators in the country.

Webzen has embarked on an anti-piracy effort to enforce the company's intellectual property rights in the Philippines.

Belaro was appointed resident agent of Webzen.

Level Up!'s Paul has also disclosed that private servers were actually being run by small telecommunications firms outside of Metro Manila.

"They didn't know it was illegal, until we informed them that it was against the law. They complied immediately. So looking at this issue from [Webzen's] perspective, we need the [local] industry to acknowledge the sole rights of the game publishers," she previously told Infotech.

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GLOBE Telecom, Sony Ericsson and Research In Motion (RIM) have made Blackberry Connect available on the Sony Ericsson P910i for Globe subscribers.

With BlackBerry Connect technology, users will enjoy BlackBerry services on the Sony Ericsson P910i. Supported features include "push-based" wireless e-mail access, wireless e-mail reconciliation and attachment viewing via BlackBerry Enterprise ServerT and BlackBerry Internet ServiceT.

The service also features BlackBerry Enterprise Server which include wireless calendar reconciliation, remote address lookup, IT policy enforcement and commands and Triple DES encryption.

The P910i is a high-quality communications tool for voice calls, text and picture messaging and e-mail, as well as providing full PDA/organizer functions. The P910i is also a cameraphone capable of recording video and still images and provides a good gaming experience on the 262K color touch-screen. The wide range of applications available for download enables the P910i to do much more than making voice calls, thereby increasing its value for both consumers and operators. The P910i is based on the open Symbian OS v7.0 and the UIQ user interface.

Tricky Lego goes Star Wars

By Alexander Villafania
Contributor

ANYONE who knows Lego would also come to love Lego Star Wars, a video game recreating stories from all three prequel movies, with playable little Lego counterparts of some of the movie characters.

Developed by the UK firm Travelers' Tales and published by none other than Lucas Arts, the game recreates the adventures of the three Star Wars prequels. Launched à month before the opening of the third installment, "Revenge of the Sith," it was obviously intended to build up, if not satiate, the anticipation of Star Wars fanatics.

The wonderful part of Lego Star Wars is that it can be played alone or by two, reminiscent of "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, The Game." It has no option for a controller, however, and both players have to use the keyboard, making it cumbersome. Luckily the game is easy to pick up and finish, being surprisingly short. A casual 12-year-old gamer can finish in about 15 hours and older players in about 10.

The game follows many familiar scenes in each of the prequel movies, with playable versions of characters in each scene. Each episode has six scenes that can be finished in 20 or 30 minutes. You're always accompanied by at least one character in each of the scenes. As you progress, you can unlock new and unique characters that can go with you on the next adventure.

You start as Jedi Master Qui-Gon Jin with a young Obi-Wan Kenobi in Dexter's diner from Episode I, for instance. From there, you can check out some of the in-game Easter eggs at the Bar. You could also visit the parking lot with spaces for some Star Wars vehicles that you need to unlock throughout the game. Inside the diner, three doors leading to each episode of Star Wars have to be unlocked in succession.

There are about a hundred characters to unlock, each with a different skill that can be employed for in-game puzzles. The game also provides awards as Lego capping studs strewn in all game levels are collected and fill a screw bar—when filled it unlocks parts of a much larger Lego Star Wars toy.

Apart from the directional pad, there are only three buttons to remember: character toggle, attack and Force. In single player mode, you can toggle from one character to another whose skill can be used for a specific action. Some areas can be accessed only through a viaduct by a nine-year-old Anakin Skywalker. Some very high areas can be reached by Jar Jar Binks or some doors can be opened by the droids C3PO or R2D2. But it's the Jedis with their light saber skills and Force powers that you'll be using in the game most of the time.

Some quick thinking and common sense are required to solve many of the puzzles, which are neither too easy nor too hard so that younger players can go through the puzzles. The fight scenes with Darth Maul and Count Dooku would also require you to toggle continuously between the two available Jedis that you have to protect from attack by strong Dark Force powers.

The developers also did a very good job in dividing the number of puzzles with the battle scenes so as not to bore either younger or older players. There are two levels where you pilot an Imperial flying personnel carrier, shooting down Trade Federation transporters. The best one is the first stage in Episode III where you fly a W-wing through the space battle in Coruscant, just like Episode III.

There is also no game-over. The characters just keep on re-spawning after they die.

Despite the cute kiddy game look, Lego Star Wars deserves a fair shake from serious gamers to enjoy the quick progression and nifty puzzles.

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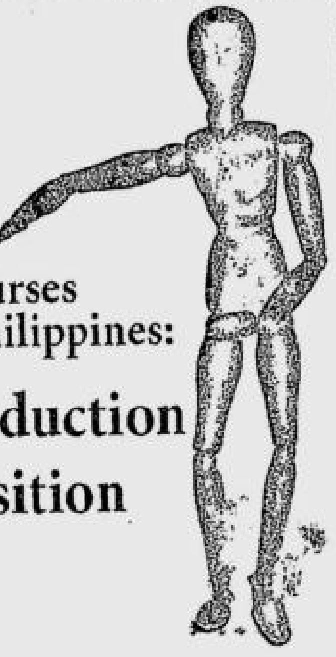

Asian gaming . . .

From page B16

line; Ranulf Goss, chairperson of the Manila chapter of the International Game Developers Association and founder/chief game architect of Slycesoft Games Development, the company developing Away Agila; Derek Arculli, CEO of Beetlerock, the company behind FairyLand Philippines; Ramil de la Cruz of the marketing department of Netplay, the Philippine publisher of PristonTale; Frances Fernandez, marketing manager of Netgames, the Philippine publisher of Khan: The Absolute Power; Marky Fernandez, games master of ABS-CBN Multimedia's Tantra Philippines; and Tjader Regis, head of the Philippine team to the World Cyber Games and organizer of WCG Philippines.

In his speech, Banaag reiterated Intel's commitment to empowering gamers, saying that the Intel platform will be optimized for gamers and game developers. Banaag also said that Intel would like to help Slycesoft Games Development, the company behind Away Agila, the first Philippine-made 3D fighting game for the PC which is now in open beta, to have the game optimized for the Intel platform.

Asked if Intel Capital, the venture capital arm of the microprocessor giant, would be interested in investing in a Filipino game development company such as Slycesoft, Banaag replied that while Intel Capital is based in Singapore and does not have a Philippine presence yet, Intel would look into Slycesoft's business viability if the game developer submits a formal proposal. In an earlier interview with Hackensack, Intel Southeast Asia telecoms manager Raymond Remoquillo said Intel is planning to match Philippine and Korean companies in game development and publishing in an effort to spur the game industry business for both countries. Remoquillo also said that Filipino game development firms could approach Intel so that the chipmaker could examine their business proposals.

Meanwhile, Goss said the Slycesoft team decided to make a 3D fighting game for the PC its initial offering because they wanted to showcase how good Filipinos are with technology. He said that Slycesoft was confident Away Agila would not suffer the fate of the first Philippine-made PC game, the role-playing game Anito, which enjoyed critical acclaim but did not achieve commercial success, in part due to piracy. Goss noted that piracy is going down in the Philippines, with the malls being cleaned out of pirated games.

For his part, Regis of the WCG Philippine team said that the local gaming community needs to embrace the idea of video games as e-sports entertainment in order to accelerate the growth of professional gaming in the Philippines. He noted that gaming will gain more legitimacy as the gamer generation takes over and more people become aware of the skills people can learn from playing video games.

Digital Paradise Inc., the ePLDT company that owns and operates EGG and Netopia, sponsored the Agja event. *With a report from Joey G. Alarilla*

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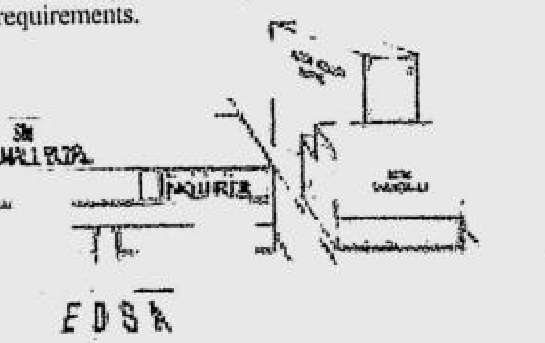

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John 3:16

Our dearly beloved
Mamang
FREDESVINDA LAGAC FARINAS
of Pasuquin, Ilocos Norte
Peacefully joined our Lord
on 04 June, 2005 at the age of 87.

Her children, Myrthy, Lydia & Oscar;
their spouses, Bobby, Ancis & Shoney
her grandchildren, Myra, Marissa, Nikko, Le-an & Tanya;
her brothers, Isabelo, Basilio, and Paulino and their families;
her sisters, Laura, Lucila & Rosa and their families;
nephews and nieces and other relatives request the pious
readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Capilla Aurora B, Arlington East,
C. Raymundo Ave. cor. Mercedes Ave., Pasig City.

For details on Interment,
please contact Lydia at 0927-2223364

Ma. Estela M. Layug

joined the Grace of our Lord at age 57
June 3, 2005

Loving Mother of Ginbee & Jeffrey, Jay & Toitoi, Dennis & Bubbles
Doting Grandmother of Chesca, Mycko, Jacob, Rau, Ice and Enzo
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Her remains lie in state at the
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Hall in New Manila, QC.
Cremation will be at Loyola Marikina on
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Family and friends wish to thank
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2444,332,342,351-360,374,378-380,401,417,2360,23622370,2373,2381,2395,2403,2420-2421,2423,5025,5030,5032-50,5057-5060,5068,5070,5076-5077,5086,5094,5096-5100,5112,5114,5117,5120,6163,6190,6201-6210,6221,7506,7507,7527,7540,7550,7566,7578,7588-7590,9384,9386-9390,9439,9442-9460,9465,58841,58860,58878,58880,58906-58910,58917,58922,60305,60307,60314,60315,60322,60335,60352,60374,60376,60862,60873,60883,60904,60922,60929,60944-60945,60959-60960,60964,60981,60985-60991,61014,61021-61040,61043,61053,61066,61068,61072,61074,61078,61081-61092,61094-61100,61102-61110,61123,61128,61134,61142-61160,63263,63271-63300,63307,63313-63320,63322,63326,63503,63541-63560,63562,63565-63581,63584,63601-63640,63647,63650,63653-63655,63657-63661,63663-63680,63686,63724-63731,63733,63736-63740,63762,63764,63782,63806,64950-64951,64961,64965-64970,64988,64997,65026-65030,65047,65049,65088,65095,65102,65114,65117,65125,63201-63220,63223,63231-63240,63243-63250,63260,68296,68308,68320,68326,69256,68261,68243,68245-68250,68257,68277-68278,68280,72514-72516,75219,72545-72550,72555,72559,72582-72587,72589-72590,72592-7260069401,73748-73749,73763,73768,73790,73795,73803,73810,74001-74030,74893,74897,74907-74920,74928,74930,74932,74936,74941,74945,74947,74952,74955,74957,74968,74975,74986,74988,75004,75033-75040,77022-77030,77032-77035,77037-77040,77042,77051,77063,77076,77084,78719,78729-78730,78733,78735,78758-78760,78776-78778,78780,78783,78789,78800,80517,80530,80546,80565,80568,80572-80573,80591-80600,80621-80630,80641,80671-80680,80684,80687,81721-81730,81733,81741-81749,81780,81792,81797-81798,81805,81811-81820

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18481-18490B,18521-18530B,18541-18630B,14651-14680B14681-14690B,14691-14720B,14751-14780B,14831-14840B,10961-10970B,10981-10990B,11021-11140B,23921-23940B,23951-23970B,6671-6820B,6851-6870B,5721-5780B,5801-10B,3891-3900B,3931-3960B,3961-3970B,3971-3990B,2041-2060B,2131-2140B,9281-9320B,81031-81070,81111-81150,81191-81230,81261-81280

BANK OF COMMERCE

78171-78200B,78200B,78211-78220B,83061-83070B,83081-83100B,83111-83140B,,83151-83160B,1671-1690B,1701-1720B,1761-1770B,3511-3520B,3531-3560B,7901-7910B,7921-7930B,8711-8720B,8751-8760B,8791-8800B,12661-12670B,12711-12710B,12741-12750B,13977-14020B

(PDI – June 6, 2005)

HOUSING AND LAND USE REGULATORY BOARD
Expanded National Capital Region Field Office
2nd Floor, HLURB Building, Kalayaan Avenue, Diliman,
Quezon City

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that PHILIPPINE NATIONAL OIL COMPANY (owner) and PHOENIX SUN INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION (developer) have filed with this Board a sworn registration statement for the sale of units at EL PUEBLO MANILA (Family Building F2, Building C –Cluster 1) located at Anonas St., Brgy 630, Sta. Mesa, Manila, specifically described as Lot 2-C-4-C Psd-3779 (portion) covered by TCT No. 143134 and

All papers relative thereto shall upon request and payment of processing fee, be available for inspection during business hours by any person having legal interest thereon.

Absent any legal impediment, the above-cited project is deemed registered and a certificate in evidence thereof, shall forthwith be issued after two (2) weeks from the last day of publication.

Quezon City, Metro Manila.

(Sgd.) JESSE A. OBLIGACION
Regional Director

(PDI- May 30 & June 6, 2005)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

This is to inform the public that **Mrs. Amalia Dancel Licsi** is no longer connected with **Shulman Airfreight International Phils. Inc.** effective April 16, 2005. All transactions entered by her will not be honored.

(PDI - June 6, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
National Electrification Administration
Quezon City

NEEDED IMMEDIATELY

GENERAL MANAGER

FOR
CAMARINES SUR III ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
(CASURECO III)
San Isidro, Iriga city

Qualifications:
- 30-50 YEARS OLD
- Male or Female
- Graduate of Business Administration, Engineering (Electrical, Mechanical, ECE), Accounting, Finance, Management or Behavioral Science
- With Master's Degree or Post-Graduate Degree preferred
- Must have at least five (5) years managerial experience in a utility-related business enterprise
- Computer literate
- Must be willing to relocate with his/her family in Iriga City

Starting Salary : P30,000.00

Application form and additional information may be obtained from the Institutional Development Department, 6th Floor, NEA Building, NIA Road, Diliman, Quezon City. Deadline for submission of application forms is on 30 June 2005.

(Sgd.) **EDITA S. BUENO**
Administrator

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VPAP
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3. Personal checks payments will require a guarantor before acceptance.
4. Please make checks payable to Veterinary Practitioners Association of the Philippines or VPAP.

For more information and inquiries please call:

DR. CRIS S. PINEDA
Convention Chairperson
(632)637-3640 / (0917) 847-9262
drcris@i-manila.com.ph

DR. SAZA MARISTELA
VPAP Board Secretary
(0920)920-7859
secretary@vpap.org.ph

VPAP Secretariat
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Department of Health
Center for Health Development – NCR
DR. JOSE N. RODRIGUEZ MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
Tala, Caloocan City
Telefax: 962-82-09 / Tel. 962-98-84 May 30, 2005

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Dr. Jose N. Rodriguez Memorial Hospital invites responsible and duly accredited suppliers from DOH/CHD-NCR to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply of the following items:

A.	Bakery Products	F.	Transport/Motorpool Supplies
B.	Drugs/Medicines	G.	Construction & Electrical Supplies
C.	Medical Supplies	H.	Drugs/Medicines (Pay Pharmacy)
D.	Laboratory Supplies	I.	Medical Oxygen & LPG Gas
E.	Janitorial Supplies	J.	Fire Extinguisher Refills

SCHEDULE OF BIDDING ACTIVITIES:

Issuance of Bid Documents	June 10, 2005 (8:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.)
Pre-bid Conference	Items A-J June 10, 2005 (10:00 P.M.)
Checking of Eligibility Requirements	June 15-16, 2005 (8:00 A.M.-4:00 P.M.)

Submission & Opening of Bids :
Items A. June 21, 2005 (9:00 A.M.)
B. June 21, 2005 (10:00 A.M.)
C. June 21, 2005 (1:30 P.M.)
D. June 22, 2005 (10:00 A.M.)
E. June 22, 2005 (1:30 P.M.)
F. June 23, 2005 (10:00 A.M.)
G. June 23, 2005 (1:30 P.M.)
H. June 24, 2005 (10:00 A.M.)
I. June 24, 2005 (1:30 P.M.)
J. June 24, 2005 (2:30 P.M.)

Prospective bidders may secure bid proposal form from the BAC Secretariat, Dr. Jose N. Rodriguez Memorial Hospital, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00).

All activities shall be held at the Training Room, Dr. Jose N. Rodriguez Memorial Hospital, Tala, Caloocan City, unless announced otherwise.

Each bid must be accompanied by a bidder's bond in the form of a certified check, manager's check, or GSIS Bond in an amount equivalent to a percentage of the approved budget for the contract to be bid. The Approved Budget Cost is stated on the bid documents.

For further inquiries, interested bidders may contact the BAC Secretary or call telephone No. 962-9884 or 962-9886.

Dr. JNRMH reserves the right to accept or reject any bid and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at anytime prior to notice of award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidders of the grounds for the hospital's action.

(Sgd.) EDGARDO SA. JAVILLONAR, MD, MHA.
Chief of Sanitarium III

(PDI – May 31 & June 6, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
ZAMBOANGA CITY SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY
San Ramon, Zamboanga City

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

CONSTRUCTION OF ONE (1) UNIT
STANDARD MANUFACTURING BUILDING

The Zamboanga City Special Economic Zone Authority (ZCSEZA) will construct a storage-type building with a total floor area of 1,032 square meters within the First Industrial Park. The completed structure will be leased/ rented out to prospective investors in the zone.

1. The Zamboanga City Special Economic Zone Authority (ZCSEZA), through the Corporate Operating Budget 2005 intends to apply the sum of **SIX MILLION FIVE HUNDRED FIFTY-TWO THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED FORTY PESOS & 27/100 (P6,552,540.27)** being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for **"Construction of One (1) Unit Standard Manufacturing Building"**. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The ZCSEZA now invites potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for **"Construction of One (1) Unit Standard Manufacturing Building"** Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the eligibility forms. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The deadline for submission of eligibility documents shall be on or before **June 29, 2005.** Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Document. Completion of the works is required within **155 Calendar Days**.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted unless otherwise stated to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with IRR Part A of R.A. 9184, only Bids from Bidders who pass an eligibility check will be opened. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during post-qualification.
4. Interested Bidders shall secure the Eligibility documents, upon their submission of a Letter of Intent (LOI Form available at the address given below), from the BAC Secretariat at the address stated below, on or before **June 20, 2005**. They shall submit the accomplished Eligibility documents, in order for these to be received by the BAC Secretariat in the same address, on or before **June 29, 2005**.
5. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from ZCSEZA and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 am to 5:00 p.m. on **June 30, 2005 to July 7, 2005**.
6. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of nonrefundable fee of **Two Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (P 2, 500.00)**. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative on or before **June 30, 2005 to July 7, 2005**
7. The ZCSEZA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on **July 15, 2005 at 10:00 AM** at the Conference Hall, Ground Floor Administration Building, San Ramon, Zamboanga City.
8. Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below at or before **July 28, 2005 at 10:00 a.m.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of Cash, Certified Check, Cashier's Check, Manager's Check and in an amount of **Sixty Five Thousand Five Hundred Twenty Five Pesos & 40/100 (P65,525.40)**. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on **July 28, 2005 at 10:00 a.m.** at the Conference Hall, Ground Floor, Administration Building, San Ramon, Zamboanga City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the address below on **July 28, 2005 at 10:00a.m.**
9. The ZCSEZA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) **GEORGINA PANTALEON –YU**
Chairman and Administrator
Zamboanga City Special Economic Zone Authority
Administration Building, San Ramon, Zamboanga City
(062) 992-0400, (062) 993-0209

(PDI - May 30 & June 6, 2005)

House body OKs insurance for pre-need firms

Pre-need insurance unit will safeguard educational plan holders, solon says

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE HOUSE committee on appropriations has approved a proposal to set up the Philippine Pre-Need Insurance Corp. (PPIC), a body that will cover troubled pre-need firms.

According to sources at the Securities and Exchange Commission, the special body will promote and safeguard the interests of plan holders by providing insurance coverage on all pre-need contracts to support the pre-need industry.

The House committee's approval is a crucial step toward the allocation of a budget for the proposed body, the sources.

The bill, authored by the committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries under Rep. Jaime Lopez of the second district of Manila, will be up for its third and final reading before the House of Representatives.

Once approved, the PPIC will become a government-owned and controlled corporation attached to the SEC, said Gerard Lukban, Commission secretary.

The PPIC will also administer the insurance fund for pre-need firms. The national government will contribute P50 million to set up the fund.

To help build up the fund, collections from pre-need firms will be used, as well as reserves for insurance and financial assistance and retained earnings.

The insurance unit will cover pre-need firms considered closed due to insolvency.

It was also proposed that the new body should be given the authority to borrow from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas for insurance purposes. The amount must not exceed a total of P500 million at any one time.

The BSP however has expressed its reservations on this provision since the PPIC would not be under its supervision.

It was proposed that the PPIC be under the supervision of the Department of Finance.

Lopez, who is the chair of the House Committee on banks and financial intermediaries, earlier filed the bill on setting up the Philippine Pre-Need Insurance Corp. that will be structured like the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. (PDIC).

"[With the PPIC,] the insurer can be reinsured," Lopez had said. "Just like the PDIC, which insures liabilities of banks."

He added that the bill will complement the action of Congress to give the Insurance Commissiom the authority to supervise pre-need companies.

The pre-need industry lately has taken a beating after some big firms like the College Assurance Plan Philippines Inc. (CAP) and Pacific Plans Inc. ran into financial problems.

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Per DTI NCR Permit No. 2687, Series of 2005

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Live up to your promise, PPI told

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission is urging troubled pre-need firm Pacific Plans Inc. to live up to its promise that it will set aside "sufficient funds" to fulfill its tuition support obligation.

PPI's obligation to plan holders for the current school year runs up to P591 million.

PPI temporarily has cut off its funding support to 34,000 plan holders after the SEC revoked the license of Lifetime Plans Inc., which used to be a subsidiary of PPI.

As a result of the SEC order, Lifetime will again become a unit of Pacific Plans.

According to PPI, the SEC's order to revoke LPI's incorporation will affect the rehabilitation of Pacific Plans.

PPI has put up P591 million in tuition fund for the present school year. Ambassador Alfonso Yuchengco personally contributed P250 million to the fund. The proposed rehabilitation plan will account for the remaining P341 million.

Of the total P591 million, PPI has yet to release P161 million to plan holders. The firm has deferred the release of the funds until it has cleared some issues with the SEC.

The SEC also said in a statement that PPI should not use the cancellation of the certificate of incorporation of its subsidiary, Lifetime Plans Inc., as an excuse to "renege" on its tuition payments.

"The incorporation papers of Lifetime have no bearing at all to the commitment PPI made to the Makati court to give tuition support to its traditional plan holders while its petition for rehabilitation is pending in court," SEC said in a statement.

It also said that PPI's tuition support was approved by the Makati regional trial court when PPI filed its petition for rehabilitation. It pointed out that the SEC did not have any participation in that action.

"It is between PPI and the court," the SEC said. "It will be recalled that PPI applied for rehabilitation while it was in the middle of discussions with the SEC for the reorganization of its corporate structure to meet alleged financial [problems]."

The SEC also said that although Lifetime's certificate has been revoked, the company can use its trust fund to pay for maturing plans even without the prior approval of the SEC.

All that is required of Lifetime is that it must inform the SEC of withdrawals from the trust fund and the names of the plan holders whose policies have been paid.

"There is no reason for Lifetime to complain that the cancellation of its certificate of incorporation has prevented it from servicing its maturing obligations," SEC said.

Two groups of planholders have asked the SEC to order PPI to keep paying tuition fees this school year after PPI abruptly stopped the release of P161 million in funds.

The Coordinating Alliance for Reform & Employment in the Pre-need Industry (CARE PreNeed) and the Alyansang Reporma at Ugnayang Galing at Aruga sa Pre-Need Industry (ARUGA-PreNeed), representing about 5,000 PPI planholders, are urging the pre-need firm to honor its promise to provide financial aid.

"Many plan holders are pinning their hopes on such assistance to ensure the enrollment of their children this coming school year ... such an assistance should cover the whole school year and not merely the first semester enrollment," Care-PreNeed and Aruga PreNeed said.

The groups said that SEC's decision to revoke the registration of Lifetime has immediately drawn a drastic response from PPI to suspend the tuition fee assistance it promised plan holders. The members have appealed to the SEC to reconsider its decision.

"With school opening just around the corner the grim scenario awaiting plan holders is that the enrollment of their children would be left hanging in the vine of uncertainty, while the commission and PPI engage in legal squabble the two groups wrote in their letter to the SEC

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

BOTE
QUALITY WINS THE FUTURE
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OTHER MODELS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE

E-mail: pr_business@inquirer.com.ph

BUSINESS Monday

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

E.D.S. FingerID
BIOMETRIC BUSINESS SOLUTIONS
P15,000
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913-6787

Discover mutual funds as savings tool

By Romulo I. Neri
National Economic and Development Authority Director

THE BEST investment decisions are made with the best use of available information.

In the Philippines however, since there is a dearth of information on where people can invest, most Filipinos still keep their extra funds in savings account that earn them three percent per annum. The yield on time deposits, which at longer maturities can offer around 8 to 10 percent at best, is not an attractive option either.

Not too many know that a good alternative to a savings account is investing in mutual funds. For as low as P5,000 one can invest in a mutual fund, which by far is one of the best investments ever created since 1924 by three Boston securities executives that decided to pool their money together. The beauty of investing in mutual funds rests on its convenience and cost efficiency. Although mutual funds do not offer a guaranteed yield, historically, they are known to provide an average of return that is higher than what savings account or time deposits offer.

What is a mutual fund

A mutual fund is simply a pool of funds invested in stocks or bonds with a predetermined investment of objective. The mutual fund will have a fund manager who is responsible for investing the pooled money into specific securities (usually stocks or bonds). Hence, one need not study each and every stock to buy and capitalize on the financial expertise and track record that the fund manager offers.

Of course, the biggest advantage to mutual funds is diversification, which is its ability to put one's investments into several instruments of varying risk and return profiles.

In fact, diversification is not limited to buying multiple stocks alone, but after buying different kind of stocks, you can add on bonds, then international bonds, and the list goes on at varying levels of financial sophistication. This is something that a small investor cannot do on his own, or perhaps will consume weeks and months for a big investor to do, but can be done instantaneously with a mutual fund since they automatically diversify in a predetermined category of investments that the financial manager intently and periodically analyses. After all, the saying "don't put your eggs in one basket" is a tried and tested adage that investors, big or small, should take to heart.

SINCE there is a dearth of information on where people can invest, most Filipinos keep their extra funds in savings account that barely earn them anything.

In terms of liquidity, mutual funds also offer an easy exit since in the event that the investor needs his money, mutual fund companies allow the investor to pull out his investments, and redeem his shares at the prevailing net asset value per share or NAV.

Mutual funds are usually classified into:

1) a stock fund or a mutual find purely invested in equities

2) a balanced funds which is a mix of both stock and fixed-income placements; and

3) a bond fund which is purely invested in government securities. In the Philippines, because of the conservative nature of investors, mutual funds are predominantly placed in bond funds (94 percent) an only 2 percent of the assets are in stock or equity fund, based on the most recent 1994 data. Balanced funds corner around 4 percent of the market.

Miniscule

The mutual funds industry in the Philippines can still be considered miniscule. As of 2004, the industry's net assets stood at P52.95 billion, with reportedly some 25 funds in existence. Contrast this with over 10,000 mutual funds in the US today totaling around $7 trillion (with approximately 83 million individual investors). Despite the fact that the $7 trillion (With approximately 83 million individual investors).

Despite the fact that the local mutual funds industry traces its roots from as far back as the 1950's, there are really only three major players in the industry: the BPI Management and Trust Group, Philam only three major Asset Management Inc. and Sunlife Asset Management Inc. The largest fund in the industry is still the Ayala Life Fixed Income Fund with a P21.715 billion and Philam Bond Fund at the third place with P7.814 billion. At the fourth place is Sun Life Bond Fund with P4.609 billion industry share. The Ayala Life's Dollar Bond Fund came in next with P2.295 billion fund size. As of December 2002, it was estimated that mutual funds are only a 2 percent of the amount invested in savings and time deposits. Needless to say, with this volume. the mutual funds sector has an insignificant

DISCOVER/ B2-2

PHOTOS BY LEONCIO BALBIN

CATCHING oysters used to be rare in Caoayan

Spain helps Ilocos fisherfolk deal with hunger

By Frank Cimatu
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

VIGAN CITY—Every so often, an "FBI" or a full-blooded Ilocano will have a hankering for *inabraw*, a soup dish made of ampalaya (bitter gourd) leaves, mushroom (locally known as *uong*) and grilled fish, particularly bangus (milkfish) or hito (catfish). This comfort food is not only healthy but evokes the simple Ilocos life.

Inabraw, or rather its ingredients, is the newest business venture of fisherfolk here and in nearby Caoayan town, through the help of a Spanish nongovernment organization, Accion Contra el Hambre (AcH or Action Against Hunger).

The AcH had set up the Vigan–Caoayan fisheries project (VCFP) two years ago to make local fisherfolk economically reliant and independent from their harvest from the sea. Although the AcH project will end this month, all indications show that the fisherfolk will be in for a good harvest.

Take the bangus, for example.

Fisherfolk in Barangay Fuerte in Caoayan harvested more than 1,700 kilograms of bangus in February while those in the Villamar aquaculture project, also in Caoayan, harvested more than 400 kg.

Fuerte, the biggest and most crowded barangay in Caoayan, had been in for a run of bad luck since typhoon Feria struck three years ago and destroyed their houses.

Replacing their houses with semi-permanent shacks, the residents decided to make another living from the river that could be their worst enemy when it floods.

With the help of AcH, the men trained on how to build a bangus fish cage from available materials. Although the AcH made two floating cages, the men made another cage on their own and are set to from at the end of the month.

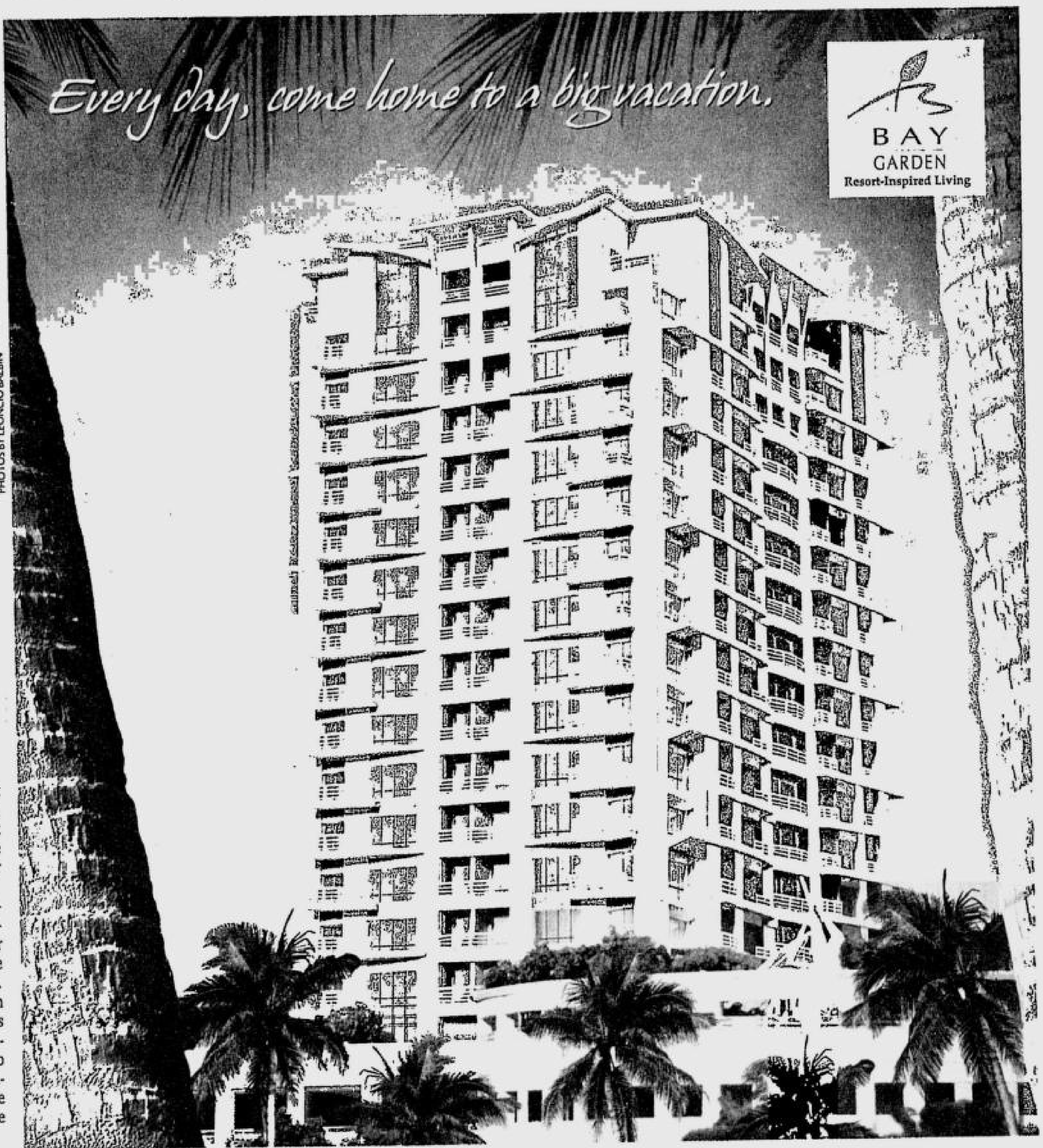
It was also their first time to culture oysters which previously grew rarely in the area.

Crispin Quiamno, chair of the Fuerte Oyster Growers and Bangus Raisers Association, said the oyster project started last October with with training and stocks brought by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

In February this year, they made their first harvest of cultured oysters ever —450 gantas of oysters worth almost P15,000, Quiamno said. AcH said the Villamar fisherfolk also earned about P2,000 from oysters.

Quiamno says they would expand operations next year. AcH had taught them to make their

SPAIN/ B2-3



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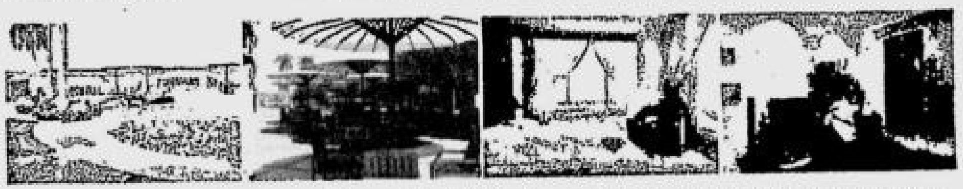

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Discover ...

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contribution to stock market.

Financial education

Financial education is key to further growth of the mutual funds industry in the Philippines. On the one hand, it is true that there are industry issues that the players are grappling with and are still trying to resolve. Among these include the mutual fund's strong resemblance to the Common Trust Funds (and now the Unit Investment Trust Fund (UITFs) and while faced with strong competition from these alternative instruments, mutual funds are subject to more taxes which is a disincentive to investors. The lack of strong regulation is another unresolved issue. However, while industry players are working on leveling the playing field among them, active work should also be done to increase awareness among the investing public on the benefits of mutual funds as an alternative savings instrument. At present, it is the investment agents that play the main role of disseminating information on mutual funds but these agents are attracted to push more the insurance and pre-need products that give them more commissions.

One good way to disseminate information is to educate potential clients by way of seminars and forums held in offices/workplaces or other organized public venues.

While published literature on mutual funds abound, nothing beats a personal explanation of its features by experts themselves. For instance, determination of the Net Asset Value (NAV), which is key to monitoring the value of one's investment, may be unknown to a detailed document distributed to clients and potential savers that contains all the information that should be disclosed to an investor, can better serve the user if explained point by point in a laymanized version.

The thrust of educating small savers and equipping them with more information that can enable them to come up with better investment decisions can be shared responsibility between the players and the policymakers.

The advancement of the mutual funds industry in the country will benefit both the individual saver and the economy at large, which gains from a much improved system of mobilizing savings.

'Change or perish: The choice is yours'

MAPPING THE FUTURE

By Franco G. del Rosario

THE TITLE of this article is the theme of this year's MAP International CEO Conference that will be held on Oct. 19, 2005 at the Makati Shangri-La. Just like death, change is inevitable; be it in business or in our personal lives.

For the most part, we can determine the effect of change to us. Instead of becoming victims of change, we could anticipate change so that it helps us increase the quality of our life.

There are those who say "human beings are creatures of habit." This kind of people like the pattern they have developed for themselves to the point that they resist change; preferring instead to stay in their comfort zone. This is a sure way to perish.

Comfort zone: enemy of change

What's the problem with staying in one's comfort zone? The problem is we tend not to be driven and we no longer grow. And, when we no longer grow, we start to die inside as we basically stop contributing in a meaningful way beyond ourselves. Eventually, we start to feel our life is perishing and our whole world is falling apart.

There are stories written about people that felt they stopped growing and contributing, and one day just called it "quits"; notwithstanding all their successes. Some turned to eating, drugs, alcohol as an alternative way to make themselves feel good. The ones we come to know about are especially those high-profile ones in the United States, like movie actors, professional sports coaches, business executives who just stopped doing what they were best in because they did not feel'fulfilled.

But why have some of these people subsequently gone back into some kind of venture? Because it provided them with some challenges that made them feel like they were contributing to something meaningful.

Change to become what?

If we are not a team player, we need to change to become one. Who do we become a team player with? Answer: family, friends, co-workers. For most people, happiness is growing and contributing. As a team player, we find the reason to constantly grow, otherwise we get comfortable easily.

The people we care for make us compelled to constantly contribute. There is no easier way for us to grow and find true meaning in life other than becoming a team player. One critical distinction of human beings is that we do more for others we care about than we will ever do for ourselves. This is what drives us. But, why is this so? The reason is one of the greatest human needs is to be loved and accepted, especially by our peer group.

People's greatest need

Love and acceptance of others is so high in people's priorities to the point they may sacrifice their own success for it. For example, someone successful may feel resented by his or her peer group for being so. Hence, that person may decide to succeed only so much so as not to lose all the good feelings associated with being loved and accepted by his or her peer group. What happens is people tend to generalize and make up a belief of being resented for succeeding from an isolated experience.

But, as soon as we close the door of success, this is actually closing the door to what we want. So what we need to do is to step up as leaders because it is the only way to end up having a life that is quite extraordinary and unbelievably rewarding. If we truly want freedom, we have to free ourselves from the slavery to the belief structures we have developed.

There are more than enough real obstacles in the outside world but we add even more imagined ones in our head. The worst ones are those that we make truly certain in our mind that we believe are true. Even if we know better intellectually, we still believe them.

Behavior is belief-driven

What is a belief? It is a feeling of absolute certainty about something. What we end up doing is we, so-to-speak, put legs under our belief that it becomes a solid belief to us.

Even when we are not consciously aware, we do things because we believe it will lead us to something we need or want. Be it one of the many human needs, such as our need for certainty, our need for variety, our need for connection, our need for significance, our need to grow, our need to contribute. Beliefs control all of it. So, we need to take care of the belief, as this takes care of the root of it all. If we just work on changing the behavior but still have the same beliefs, we may find some other behavior that is just as bad or worse.

Change our belief structure

We have a set of beliefs of what is appropriate to feel or think or experience. So, we have a bunch of rules, a set of beliefs that we never really have thought through in detail. Basically, our rules are a reaction to our past. If, for example, we experienced pain, this is what actually makes up "rules" so we won't feel that pain again. Or, we look up other people even if they are not a good role model.

Eventually, we find ourselves in a box where there are only so many things we can do and most things we can't do, and we wonder why we are unhappy.

As kids, we start out with no rules. We do anything we want, we express what we feel. We can think what we want to think. We love who we want to love. We do what we want to do. Then, we gradually enter society where the door gets smaller and all of a sudden, there are consequences for everything. If we are not careful, pretty soon we stop living (so-to-speak).

So what we have to do is to dig out from inside of us those beliefs that are keeping us from having what we want. Some of these beliefs are so weird that intellectually we know better; but emotionally, they still control our lives.

Why attend the conference?

We need to attend because whatever it is we want to learn, achieve, or master, there is somebody else out there who can help us do it faster. These people know other people, know situations, and possess the resources that we can learn from.

Attending this Conference on Oct. 19 at the Makati Shangri-La may very well be what could save us from perishing. We will hear from great "Change Masters"—sterling examples of leaders who have survived countless challenges and have reinvented their companies, their products, their processes, their cultures, their industries, themselves.

Among the speakers are: Polly Nazareno, Smart CEO, Gabby Lopez, ABS-CBN chair, Jim Davis, Global chief marketing officer of SAS Institute (most recently ranked No. 8 in FORTUNE's 100 "Best Companies To Work For)," Ramon del Rosario Jr., PHINMA president, Daniel Moran, Red Ribbon president, Do Ejercito, Unilab president, Tessie Sy-Coson, SM Group president (FORTUNE's No. 7 Most Powerful Woman).

For more information on the Conference, please call the MAP Secretariat at 751-1151 to 52, or e-mail: sixsigma@pldtdsl.net. See you there!

(The author is co-chair of the MAP CEO Conference Committee and managing consultant and CEO of Six Sigma Consulting. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

Philam Plans has the largest trust fund in pre-need!

Ensuring the peace of mind and the financial security of its hundreds of thousands of planholders has always been the thrust of Philam Plans. Although a relative youngster in the four-decade old pre-need industry, Philam Plans at sixteen years has built the largest and most stable trust fund to date.

Reports from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) revealed Philam Plans has over P15.3 B in trust funds as of March 2005, majority of which is placed in liquid and near cash investments.

This trust fund level can more than cover for all the present and future obligations of Philam Plans, reason why its planholders are assured that they can reap the benefits of the money they entrusted to the company in time of their need.

The trust fund is the money a pre-need company sets aside for the payment of planholder benefits. It is the yardstick of security for the planholders in determining the ability of pre-need companies to deliver its promises. The more liquid the trust fund, the greater the ability of the pre-need company to meet its obligations.

Security of trust fund

The SEC sets a policy on trust fund investment portfolio mix for pre-need companies to ensure that they have enough liquid assets and are able to meet their obligations to planholders. Philam Plans adheres to all these requirements as well as to the stricter standards set by its parent company, the country's leading insurance company, Philamlife.

Philam Plans' trust fund portfolio is highly liquid, with over 80% invested in government and near cash equivalents. A consortium of the country's most reputable and professionally run banks including Deutsche Bank, Equitable-PCIB and Philam Savings Bank manage the fund.

Assured benefits: 2005 and beyond

This year, Philam Plans gears up to pay its full maturing obligations totaling to P574 million.

Education benefits amounting to P89 million were released to 8,000 planholders nationwide since April 30. Philam Plans issues manager's checks that are as good as cash to ensure the complete peace of mind of its beloved planholders. Over 3,000 Philam Plans pension planholders are set to receive a total of P362 million from the company this year.

At P15.3 billion trust fund level, Philam Plans not only covers all its present obligations but those for the future years as well. From 2006 to 2011, the programmed maturity benefits of Philam Plans is P9.3 billion, an amount well covered even with the current trust fund levels.

As Philam Plans continues its production growth and its adequate trust fund contributions, its trust fund will continue to grow, assuring at all times that the company will make good on its promises to planholders.

A record of promises kept

As the leader in the pre-need industry, Philam Plans strives to be the standard of excellence in pre-need as it secures the education of the next generation of Filipinos, the retirement of thousands of our countrymen and the commemoration of a well-lived life.

Its inherent strength lies behind its Philam name and its grand heritage from Philamlife. Both are known for financial strength, fiscal prudence and the highest levels of fiduciary integrity.

On its 16th year and beyond, Philam Plans stands by its unblemished record of promises kept. The company continues to uphold the welfare and the future of its valued planholders with innovative products and services that suit their various pre-needs.

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Spain helps Ilocos...

From page B2-1

business sustainable through training in marketing and alternative trading.

Whatever they earned would be given to the operators and to the seed fund that would be used for the next seeding and setting up of equipment. What is left is equally divided among the members, Quiamno says.

The communities in Vigan, which are relatively far from the sea, have set up their micro-hatcheries for tilapia.

In February, about 75,000 fingerling stocks were distributed in the villages of Mindoro, Raois, Barraca, San Pedro, Pantay Laud, Ayusan Sur, Cabalangegan and Pantay Fatima.

"Fishing is such an uncertain livelihood," Quiamno said in Ilocano. "But with these alternative livelihood projects, we hope our family would never go hungry."

His only lament was that the women were left out. But AcH had taken care of that in other areas.

The Pantay Daya Fishermen's Association in Vigan inaugurated in January its mushroom house.

Run by the women, the house has 16 two-layer mushroom beds set initially for straw mushrooms.

The beds were made from water hyacinths, which choke up the river anyway. These were impregnated with mushroom spawn and after two weeks, the mushrooms were ready for harvest. The women harvested 4 kg of mushroom per meter of the bed. The mushrooms were sold for P100 to P120 a kg, Perla Desaluna, AcH technical coordinator, said.

She said the mushroom house is environmentally friendly as it not only uses water hyacinths, which are considered weeds in the river, but also siling labuyo (chili) and soap to ward off ants and termites. In March, some of the women were trained on fish processing. Because of this, the VCFP now sells smoked fish, marinated boneless bangus, dried fish and bagoong (fish paste).

In line with their philosophy that "organic is better," only local fresh fish are processed. They use achuete to color the smoked bangus, for example, instead of chemical preservatives and artificial flavors.

Sawdust, lumber refuse, rice hull and sugarcane bagasse are used in smoking bangus, galunggong and tilapia.

Because these aquaculture projects depend on sound ecosystem, the fisherfolk became champions of the environment. Quiamno says not have only their members stopped illegal forms of fishing, like using cyanide and dynamite, but they also initiated regular coastal cleanup.

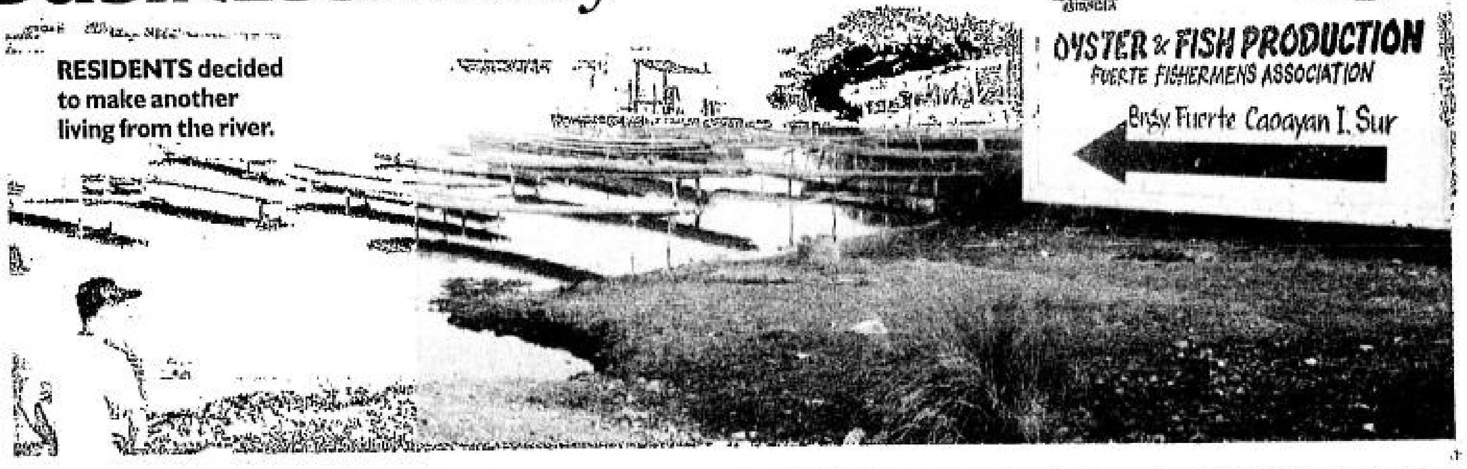
The projects became a venue for so-called "collective leadership" where anybody could act as leader because the members got their fair and equal share from the profits.

As a result, the different fisherfolk organizations formed federations to unite and attain a single goal.

The 14 such associations in Caoayan, for example, formed their federation to fight illegal fishing within their area and also help establish a lambaklad or a fish corral.

A Filipino version of the otoshi-ami fishing method of Japan, it is operated like a deep-sea fish corral set with nets and harvests are done daily.

But then a diet of fish alone may be monotonous and when there is another hankering for inabraw, the other ingredients are just around the corner.



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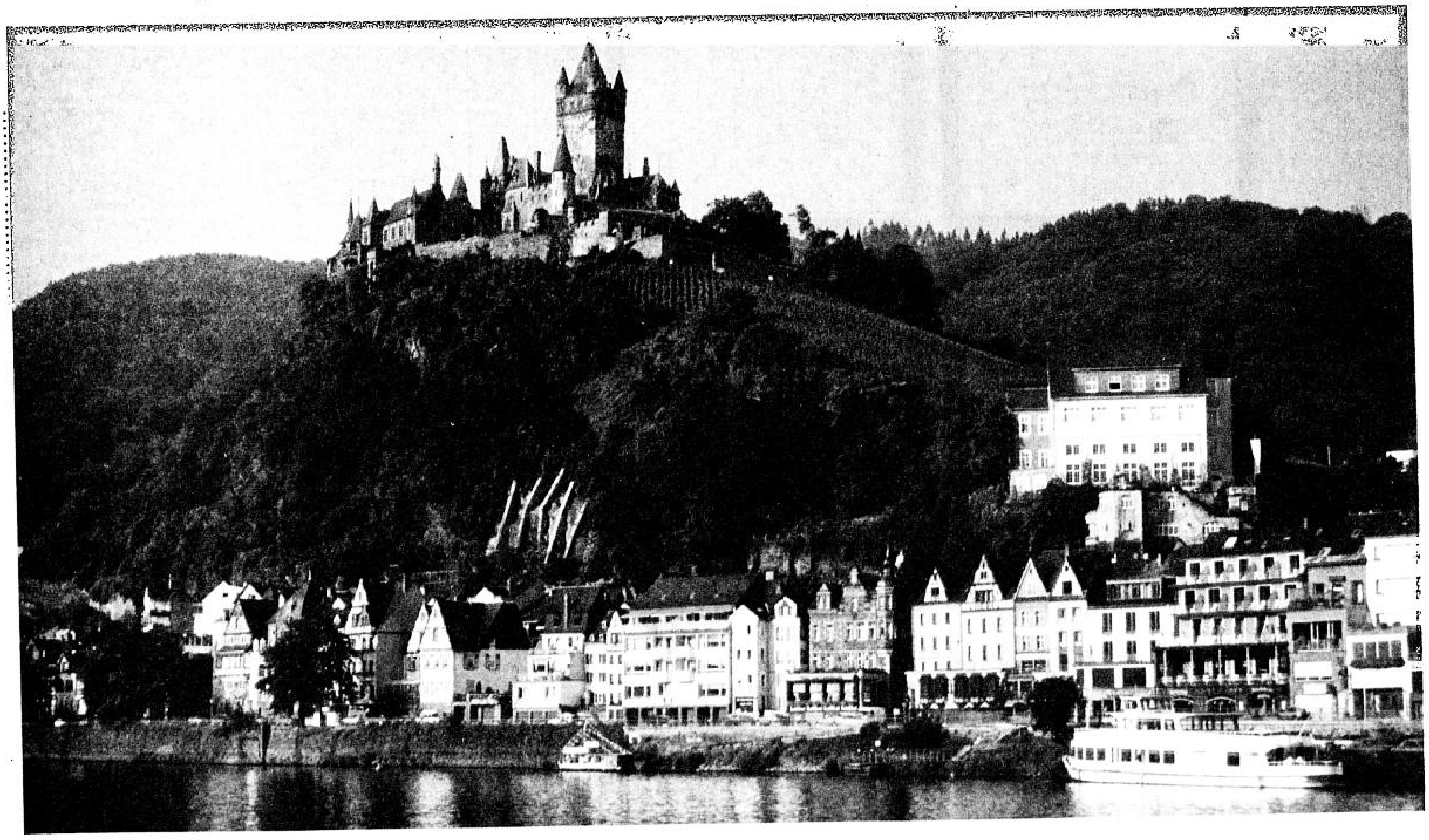

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RP needs to show the world its software-making capability

By Amy R. Remo

THE ORGANIZER of one of Asia's most comprehensive information and communications technology exhibit in Singapore claims that CommunicAsia 2005 has a lot of opportunities in store for the Philippines.

WONG

"CommunicAsia2005 provides an international platform for the Philippines to showcase its outsourcing capabilities in software development and animation other than the traditional call center outsourcing," says Singapore Exhibition Services Pte. Ltd. project director Victor Wong.

In recognition of outsourcing's huge contribution to the country's economic growth, the Philippine government shifted its focus to business process outsourcing in 2003.

Hoping to emulate the success it has achieved in the call center space, the government has recently given priority to other e-service sectors such as software development and animation services.

Wong says that in the upcoming ICT summit and the BroadcastAsia2005—which will be held simultaneously in Raffles City Convention Center, Singapore from June 14 to 17—local companies will not only benefit from the international exposure but they will also have the chance to learn from multinational ICT giants.

"This exhibit goes beyond buying and selling. People around the world converge here to establish a network, keep abreast with the latest trends, innovations and leadership strategies and to share experiences," says Wong.

Participating local companies include Bidshot Wireless, Cube Interactive, Cube Production, Chikka.com, Globe Telecom, Globequest, Icon Interactive, Innove Communications, Mabuhay Satellite, PLDT, Tincan Mobile and Veritas System.

Power of convergence

Wong says the power and necessity of convergence, as well as the emergence of the digital lifestyle, will be highlighted during the exhibit.

The gathering of ICT industry giants from over 50 countries worldwide will itself exemplify convergence as it will incorporate specific industry summits for mobile commerce and communications, networking, satellite communications, professional audio equipment and services, computer graphics, gaming and animation techniques and cable and satellite technologies—all under one roof for your perusal.

Established since 1979, CommunicAsia covers a wide spectrum in the ICT industry. It is organized and owned by the Singapore Exhibition Services, Asia's top organizer of trade events.

"Opportunities abound in the trade expo. The exhibit does not only offer companies a chance to showcase their latest products and services, but it also serves as an international platform for establishing presence in the global market, developing future transactions, forging new partnerships and alliances and closing business deals," explains Wong.

With over 1,500 exhibiting companies and an estimated sourcing budget of around $3 billion from more than 10,000 preregistered visitors, the expo will be a haven for companies who want to snag a share of the huge and growing ICT market.

A total of more than 45,000 business professionals are expected to gather in one of Asia's biggest showcase for the ICT industry.

Seminars and conferences will also be held in conjunction with the exhibit. Visitors can expect head honchos from the biggest ICT players like Carl Henric Svanberg, president and CEO of Ericsson to talk about their perspectives on certain ICT topics and issues.

Key exhibitors include Lucent Technologies, Jutel, Apple LG, Panasonic, Sony, Ericsson, Telekom Malaysia, Motorola, UTStarcom, Barco, Siemens, among others.

"What we're seeing more in the recent months is a growing digital convergence where all sectors of ICT and consumer electronics have been integrated into a single industry," says Wong.

Almost all businesses, he says, are going beyond their core businesses to suit and adapt to the fickle and multiple lifestyles of the consumers, providing them with gadgets, software and tools to make life easier and more convenient.

For instance, mobile phone manufacturers do not simply create cell phones for calls and text messaging.

Most telcos have now repackaged their cell phones in various designs and shapes to include more features and content such as visual radio, camera, games, internet capabilities and videoconferencing and recording capacities.

In fact, music, television and game companies have identified the mobile phone as the biggest opportunity that exists today to provide existing services and develop new ones. After all, mobile phones are no longer a luxury but a necessity—they have become a way of life.

"Convergence is really more than just a trend, but fast becoming a lifestyle," he says.

And the final concept, he adds, is the digital lifestyle for the new technology-savvy consumer.

Wong says that the companies' need to diversify and be flexible reflects the changing nature of business competition nowadays.

"There is no 100-percent competition nowadays. Somewhere, somehow, at one point in time, these companies are going to form alliances because the combined technology of some of their products will produce a better product or service," explains Wong.

Good thinking

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

IF YOU watched the swimming events at the 2004 Olympics last summer, you probably observed the incredible focus the medalists demonstrated. Sure, they're strong and fast. But when hundredths—maybe even thousandths—of a second are all that separate the winners from the losers, it's obvious that something besides strength and speed is at work.

A comment by Flip Darr, a former collegiate swimming coach who played a part in training eight Olympic medalists, sheds some light on what that critical ingredient might be. "I felt in my coaching career that if I would work on [the swimmers'] head[s], their bodies would come along," he said. "A lot of coaches work on their bodies and then at the last moment try to do their heads. The thing is, if they are working with their heads all the time, and working with their head over the body, mind over matter, they will have more confidence when they walk up to the block."

What a great illustration of the value of good thinking. Athletic ability is important, but preparing for the biggest race of one's life is as much mental as it is physical—if not more so. As Bill MacCartney, the former head football coach at the University of Colorado, once told me, "Mental is to physical what four is to one."

That's a powerful argument in the case for good thinking—on the football field, as well as in your office at work. The specific thoughts that increase your effectiveness as a leader might not be the same as those required for an Olympic medal, but the overall commitment to thinking is identical.

As we continue the discussion about thinking that we began in the last issue, here are five statements that further underscore the importance of solid contemplation.

1. Everything begins with a thought. Every great invention, every technique, every conversation, every leadership practice and every bit of personal growth starts in someone's head.

2. What we think determines who we are, and who we are determines what we do. What kind of person do you want to be? What do you want to accomplish in your life and career? Are your thoughts paving the way for you to achieve those goals, or are they getting in the way?

3. Our thoughts determine our destiny, and our destiny determines our legacy. That's pretty sobering, especially for those of us who have already passed life's halfway point. The good news is that, no matter how old you are, it's not too late for good thinking to influence your legacy in a positive way. This quote by James Allen says it well: "You are today where your thoughts have brought you, and you will be tomorrow where your thoughts take you."

4. People who go to the top think differently than others. There are many reasons for this, but it's absolutely true. As William Arthur Ward said, "Nothing limits achievement like small thinking, and nothing expands possibilities like unleashed thinking."

5. We can change the way we think. This is a comforting thought, especially in light of the previous statement. One of the best ways to change the way we think is to invest in resources that help us improve our leadership methods, our relationships, our technical competencies, our time-management skills, our ability to handle conflict, and so on. Over the years, I have been helped tremendously by books and tapes that cover such issues. They boost my thoughts and add great value to my life.

Before I close, I want to highlight the positive influence other people can have on our thought processes, and the critical impact we can have on theirs. For example, Flip Darr understood that one of his functions as a coach was to help his athletes develop the mental stamina necessary to win the big races. That's why he spent so much time "working with his swimmers' heads." As leaders, one of our jobs is to help our people learn how to think for themselves so they can perform successfully when we're not around.

At the same time, we also need to spend time with people who help us think better. I love interacting with good thinkers. They energize me. They stimulate my thoughts, challenge my ideas and stretch my mind like nothing else can. That's why I like to say that some of my best thinking has been done by others!

The bottom line is this: When it comes to success in life, the ability to think well isn't just an asset; it's a necessity. And when you make good thinking a priority today, you lay the groundwork for success tomorrow.

E-mail your comments or questions for Dr. Maxwell c/o Maxwell@inspire.ph or slvguru@pldtdsl.net. For more information on attending leadership workshops designed and licensed by John Maxwell in the Philippines call 830-2191 or 8132732/03 and ask for Gina or Jenny.

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Bank supports DOLE-SSS project

PHILIPPINE Savings Bank (PSBank) expressed support for the project of Department of Labor & Employment (DOLE) and the Social Security System (SSS) to enrol more members of the underserved sector with SSS so they can avail of benefits. The commitment was made during the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for Kabayan Kabalikat for the benefit of 25 tricycle drivers from Marulas, Valenzuela City.

Kabayan Kabalikat is a program spearheaded by DOLE in cooperation with the SSS and PSBank to create an opportunity for members of the informal sector to secure their future.

Main proponents of the program are: DOLE, as total program implementor and evaluator; the SSS, conductor of comprehensive orientations to educate the social partners on benefits and programs; and PSBank, facilitator in opening beneficiaries bank accounts. Under the program, PSBank will automatically remit to the SSS on a monthly basis through an automatic debit arrangement scheme.

PSBank has 139 branches nationwide, with 11 more to be opened soon.

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JOB Market

Building classrooms: Viable social project for firms

THE CLASSROOM Galing sa Mamamayang Pilipino Abroad (CGMA), a fund raising program of the Department of Labor and Employment that pools contributions from Filipinos working abroad to support the nationwide classroom building program for public schools is turning to be a viable option for local corporations interested in focusing on education for their corporate social responsibility projects.

Thirty-two local corporations are now supporting the program including automotive companies Isuzu Corp., Mitsubishi Corp., and Toyota Motor Philippines Corp.; food manufacturers like Dole Philippines, Nestle Philippines and CDO Food Sphere Inc.; electronics giant Matsushita Group of Companies and pharmaceutical firm Pfizer.

"While our labor attaches are pushing this program in their respective foreign posts, we also hope to see more local corporate donors," said Labor and Employment Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas. "We will definitely be able to cover more areas, reach out to a lot more schools if we can convince the country's leading corporations to support our program."

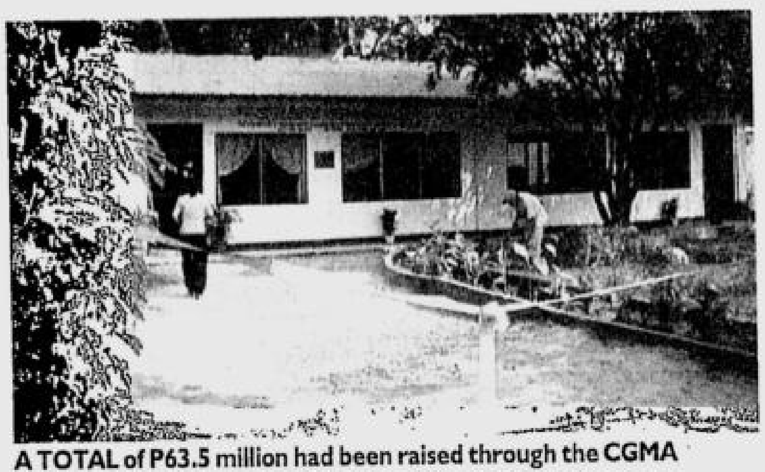
Understandably, many of the CGMA corporate donors opt to support schools in areas where they are operating. CDO Food Sphere sponsored a classroom in Sto. Domingo Elementary School in Lubao, Pampanga while Dole Philippines contributed eight classrooms in Poblacion Polomolok National High School in South Cotabato. Nestle Philippines sponsored two classrooms each for Baclaran Elementary School in Cabuyao, Laguna and Tablon National High School in Cagayan de Oro.

Isuzu Corp.'s beneficiary is Binan National High School in Laguna; Mitsubishi's is Cabcaben Elementary School in Bataan, and Toyota's is Aplaya Elementary School in Sta. Rosa, Laguna. For Matsushita, the beneficiary is Jocobo Z. Gonzales Memorial National High School in Biñan, Laguna.

The project is a collaborative effort of the Departments of

BUILDING/ B3-2

THE PUBLIC school system needs over 40,000 more classrooms. At the ballpark cost of $4,000 per classroom, at least $160 million—or close to P9 billion—would be needed to meet this shortage.



A TOTAL of P63.5 million had been raised through the CGMA program benefiting around 15,700 public school students.

An *innove-tive* link to globalization

EDUCATION enhances growth and social development, so they say. But what if education—said to be the solution to many of our country's problems and key to a better life—becomes unbelievably expensive and inaccessible to all?

Sadly however, our country still holds the record where education consistently falters every year. We see signals of strains as our educational system continues to be overburdened by the increasing enrolment as government finances fall short of funding needed improvements and as the quality of instructions have gradually deteriorated over time.

For Innove Communications, improving the quality of mass education has become an economic imperative—providing hope for the youth to prepare them to be globally competitive and help uplift the quality of lives of communities by not only giving "a man a fish" or simply teaching him "how to fish" but about whether he has a "market for his catch."

Innove CEO Gil B. Genio emphasizes the role of IT in education by calling for a broadband revolution that can transform the Filipino educational system and allow the country to catch up with global competition. "It is a revolution we support and hope to see happening soon," he states. "I believe that the Internet is a great equalizer. It will give access to knowledge for all," he adds.

As its name connotes, Innove (a Mexican-Spanish term which means to innovate) took the pivotal role of paving the rough roads between the "haves" and the "not haves." It continues to innovate until barriers to reaching out and connecting to practically anyone becomes possible. Barely two years old, Innove has already done strides in corporate responsibility programs giving emphases to three major thrusts: educational technology, that ensures the youth to acquire employable skills indispensable for employment; sustainability programs for community empowerment; and employee volunteerism by encouraging them to participate in social building by sharing knowledge through training programs.

Inching along but with perseverance to complete its vision of transforming the Philippines into an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) hub of the Asean, Innove embraces the Herculean task, a crucial role indeed. But with the best people, best team, and best practices, Innove will realize its vision in no time.

Under the program Gilas (Gearing-up Internet Literacy & Access to Students), Innove partnered with various organizations to connect and install 10 PCs (includes free IP address/ website) to 5,543 schools within five years time. As a major contributor of this project, Innove committed to link a big chunk of the target. By year-end, Innove will fully "digitize" about 388 schools in strategic areas giving students limitless access to information and knowledge as well as provide the solution for tuition-strapped students to complete a college degree via the On-line Schooling.

AN INNOVE-TIVE/ B3-2

MARIGONDON National High School (MNHS) 4th year students trying out one of the computers during the Gilas launch in Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu

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No need for fancy figures, just turn uncertainties into opportunities

WHEN Ester Punongbayan left her cushy corporate job to strike out on her own, she took a risk that some might say was equal parts gutsy and foolhardy. She had limited money and no clients. The only asset she really had was her combination of natural daring, borne out of an entrepreneurial bone, and her well-honed skills as a certified public accountant (CPA).

Judging by how far she's come since, it's apparent that the risk she took was—more than anything else—inspired.

"I wanted to be a different kind of accountant," says Ester, remembering her start-up days as an independent practitioner.

She began building her practice by tapping the market of newly-registered companies. With big accounting firms already servicing the top one thousand companies, she knew that her bread and butter could be found in the smaller start-ups.

ESTER Punongbayan

In between familiarizing herself with her target market and attending to clients, Ester pored over reading materials to supplement her work experience. "I couldn't afford to buy books or even Time or Newsweek, but I wanted to keep abreast of developments. So I spent a lot of time in places like the Asian Institute of Management library and National Bookstore, reading and doing research," she shares, adding that she even took speed-reading classes.

After a year, she was finally able to rent actual office space in a condominium—really just a table that came with a telephone, a filing cabinet and a parking slot. As her staff and client base grew, she was able to rent additional tables, then a room and, later on, half of an entire floor.

But just as her own practice was booming, Ester received an invitation to join one of the biggest public accounting firms in the country.

The Business Support Services (BSS) division of Punongbayan & Araullo (P&A) began as a very small arm that handled the accounting and payroll preparation requirements of new businesses that had not yet set up their own systems. But the convenience of the service kept drawing in more clients, prompting the firm to take a better look at the division's full potential.

P&A co-founders Ben Punongbayan and Joe Araullo needed someone who would not only supervise BSS staff, but, more importantly, streamline the operations of the division, which was still only finding its legs. After going through a number of candidates, Joe finally convinced Ben—who was initially reluctant to consider a family member for the position—that his younger sister was perfect for the job. Ester's experience as an independent practitioner, and her strong organizational and leadership skills, made her a shoo-in for the position. After carefully weighing the possibilities of handling the group, she decided to commit herself to P&A's BSS division.

"I was already developing an interest in other aspects of the practice, particularly in building client relationships. I saw that I had a talent for that," admits Ester, who made it a point to run the BSS division like a tight ship, with the ultimate vision of expanding its horizons.

She noted the emerging trend, even among established companies, of outsourcing accounting and payroll preparation functions. So she redefined the group's target market—from servicing only start-ups to pursuing even the corporate giants in the country.

The competition was tough, which increased the uncertainty of the BSS division's future. It was relatively small (made up of no more than 20 professionals) and was a new player in the field. Limited as her resources were, Ester gave her staff the same advice she held on to when she was still struggling with her independent practice: Give excellent service and clients will recommend you.

Now, the division boasts of a client portfolio that includes several multinational companies, some of which have been with BSS since Ester took over the reins. In 2003, the division won the P&A Founders Award for Team Excellence, an internal recognition given to an organizational unit or engagement team that exemplifies the Firm's core values of teamwork and excellence. And BSS is currently the fastest growing unit in the Firm.

Reflecting on how far her group has come, Ester doesn't offer a complex explanation accompanied by extensive market studies and dizzying statistical figures. Instead, she goes back to the same strategy that helped build her career: "We responded to uncertainties by turning them into opportunities."

BPI DIRECTOR Fernando Zobel de Ayala; Eugenia Apostol; BPI president Aurelio R. Montinola III; Ambassador of Singapore H.E. Lim Keng Hua; Hon. Jejomar Binay, mayor of Makati City; BPI chair Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala

Toast to a new head

JAIME Augusto Zobel de Ayala, chair of the Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI), recently hosted cocktails in honor of the newly appointed president of the bank, Aurelio R. Montinola III.

Clients, colleagues in the banking industry, from the business and government sectors, the diplomatic corps, the media and friends, joined Zobel de Ayala in the tribute for Montinola.

Guests were treated to a visual treat of the bank's various products and services shown on big screens around the venue.

Zobel de Ayala and Montinola, with BPI directors, happily welcomed the guests to the affair. Included among the guests are the Mayor of Makati City, the Honorable Jejomar Binay and the incoming governor of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Amando Tetangco Jr.

The event also marked the vital role of BPI's heritage and innovation in the development of the Philippine banking industry.

FRENCH Ambassador to Manila Mme Renee Veyret, Philippine Daily Inquirer president Alexandra Prieto-Romualdez and Globe Telecom president Gerry Ablaza

INQUIRER chair Marixi Prieto, National Bookstore president Socorro Ramos and SM group president Teresita Sy-Coson

GIZELA Gonzalez, Mastercard Southeast Asian Region SVP, GM Ajay Bhalia, Jose Villa-real and Insular Bank chair Vicente R. Ayllon

An *innove-tive* link to globalization

From page B3-1

Among Innove's noteworthy. contribution in youth and education includes the promotion of computer literacy in public high schools nationwide; contribution to the Innove-Globe-DepEd Coalition for Better Education by hosting the ICT development in youth tech schools in Cebu and Negros Oriental provinces; support to the First National Congress on Information Communications technology in basic Education at the Waterfront Hotel in Cebu City; synergized government-academe and industry linkages as it established links with them through provincial telecom centers nationwide; construction of e-Centers in Cebu Normal University, Makaturing Community giving them a taste of the "Generation Y" learning experience. These are but tip of the iceberg for Innove as it fuses together its resources, commitments and dedication to try and collectively become a great force for productive change.

Unlocking its local resources, the company participated in the call of the nation to alleviate poverty and uplift the living condition of the less privileged by providing not only high-technology solutions and services but has taken heart by immersing itself in programs and projects meant to improve people's lives—down to the community level. An off-shoot of the Internet connectivity is the training of teachers where crash courses are offered to professionals or would-be teachers of public elementary and high schools, a company philosophy of sustaining growth by investing in its people. These livelihood and entrepreneurship trainings which brings needed technical and managerial skills into the community, provides an alternative to agriculture, thus discouraging urban migration.

Looking forward, Innove Communications promises to aggressively pursue deployment for Internet access to meet every public highschools' reliance on connectivity. Other than Gilas, Innove will continue partnering with opt organizations and local government in giving technology an edge in education in the country.

Menchie V. Osial, Contributor

Building classrooms: Viable social project . . .

From page B3-1

Labor and Employment, Education and Foreign Affairs and the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc. which manages the actual construction of the buildings, said DOLE undersecretary Manuel Imson, who oversees the entire program.

Wider reach

Through the CGMA program, corporations could gain wider reach since their donations would continue to bring benefits to the children and the community year after year, even long after the construction activities have been completed, Imson added.

STUDENTS holding classes outdoors is not an uncommon sight in many areas in the country.

"They are also spared from having to handle complicated project-related tasks such as validation of titles and management of construction activities as the CGMA project office and our partner, the FFCCCI, will be handling all of these," Imson added. To ensure transparency, donors are acknowledged through a high visible signage on the wall outside the classroom.

A total of 207 individuals and Filipino associations abroad as well as in the country have so far answered the government's appeal for donations to raise money to build classrooms in various public schools previously identified by the Department of Education. The list includes 24 foreign corporate donors—half of which are manning agencies based in the Middle East.

"We received donations from 112 individuals and groups based in North America—that is, US, Canada and US Trust Territories. We also had 22 donors from our Asian neighbors, 20 from the Middle East and 14 from Europe," Imson said.

A total of P63.5 million had been raised and more pledges are coming in. The amount pooled has been programmed to build 314 classrooms, of which 157 have been turned over to the school-beneficiaries. A total of 149 public elementary and high schools are recipients of at least two new classrooms equipped with two toilets. Assuming that each room will be used by a class with 50 pupils, at least 15,700 public school pupils students are now benefiting from the program.

Based on the data from the Department of Education, a total of 7,385 classrooms are immediately needed—5,191 for the elementary schools and another 2,194 for the public schools. The total cost is estimated at P3.32 billion.

But the classroom shortage is actually a lot more acute. Assuming that each class of 50 pupils should have a classroom, the country's public elementary school system needs at least a total of 43,737 classrooms for its 2,186,874 pupils. The actual number of classrooms is only 26,695 or a shortage of 17,042 classrooms.

At the elementary level, the shortage is most acute in Metro Manila, which needs close to 9,000 additional classrooms, followed by Region 4-A or Southern Tagalog (close to 3,000 classrooms) and the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (with a little over 1,000 rooms). These three regions have the highest enrolments at the elementary level.

More is needed for the public high schools where total enrolment now stands at 3,202,757. The country's public high school system has a total of 41,039 classrooms, while the ideal, at 50 students per class, should be 64,055 classrooms.

All in all, the entire public school system needs over 40,000 more classrooms if it must stick to the standard of having 50 students per class. Given CGMA's ballpark cost of $4,000 per classroom, at least $160 million—or close to P9 billion—would be needed to meet this shortage.

"The amount definitely sounds staggering and that is why we are encouraging everybody to chip in," Sto. Tomas says. "The classroom shortage in our public school system is so acute that no contribution could be considered insignificant and any effort to help solve the problem will always be appreciated by the government."

Imson adds that the government is grateful for the assistance extended by the growing number of donors to the program. "We are glad to note that many are willing to help solve the acute classroom shortage not only in critical areas like Real, Infanta and General Nakar but in many other places all over the country. We cannot do this alone, given the current fiscal condition we are currently in," Imson said.

Among the early CGMA donors are the seamen affiliated with the Associated Marine Officers and Seamen's Union of the Philippines, which contributed P2 million to build 10 classrooms in Tala High School in Caloocan. Two out of every three classes have no classrooms in Tala. It has 6,199 students and 39 classrooms—or a student-to-classroom ratio of 159. The seamen's union, which collects the donations from each member when they renew their licenses, has again donated eight classrooms for schools in Quezon Province.

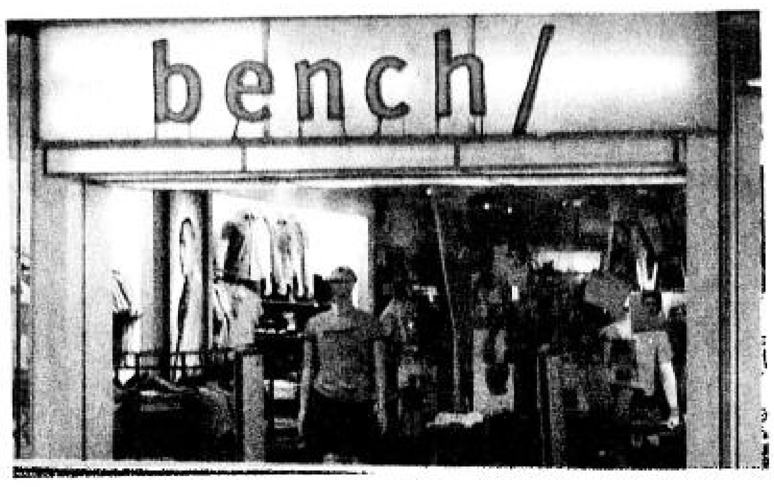
Aside from AMOSUP, the construction of these classrooms are supported by A.Y. Foundation, PIPS/Isabellamina Foundation, the Philippine Chinese Association of America (NE), Inc., Filipino American Community of New York-New Jersey, Philippine American Communities Executive Council, Philippine American Community of Northeastern USA and the Filipino American Association of Greater Birmingham

"Education is the surest path to success and progress and I have great respect for the emphasis you are all placing on this issue," said Leo van Vogel, protector of Isabellamina Foundation, in his letter to Sto. Tomas. Van Vogel's foundation based in Malaysia is one of CGMA's biggest donors, having sponsored 25 classrooms. "Your organization is by far the most professional entity with which I have worked since coming to Asia in 1992," Van Vogel added.

"We are pleased to note that all regions have benefited from the CGMA program. We owe our ability to expand the coverage of CGMA to the continued generosity of our local and foreign donors," Imson added.

Retailers try to outsmart creative thieves

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao



THIEVES are becoming more creative in their methods of stealing and pilfering, forcing retailers to constantly think of ways to outsmart them.

SINCE its products are not easily within reach of customers, Coffee Bean largely guards against internal theft.

A NEWS report recently described a woman who was able to steal several thousands of pesos worth of men's briefs from a popular underwear shop. How she did it is simply part of the growing creativity of thieves when it comes to shoplifting and pilfering.

Losing a portion of valuable sales to theft is an inevitable part of the harried life of manufacturers and retailers.

The best thing they could do is learn from past painful experiences, by putting in systems and procedures to keep losses down to an acceptable level.

The problem, however, is that unscrupulous elements that lead to losses—both from within and outside the organization—get more creative and dream up new ways to beat the system and get products and services without paying for them.

Retailers, thus, always have to be on their toes to respond to the new modus operandi and stop shoplifters and pilferers in their tracks.

Retailers know that failure to do so, amid white-competition in the marketplace, will shave off profits, and even lead to the closure of a business.

Business Monday features here some Philippine retailers that have responded to the daunting challenge to put in place systems and processes to prevent, or at least minimize, harmful losses.

Bench Body

Bench Body is one of the country's leading retailers of underwear, cosmetics, scents and accessories.

These are small items, thus, are quite easily slipped into pockets of shoplifters. And since many Filipinos flock to its stores, it is also easy for these criminal elements to escape the notice of even the most eagle-eyed of employees.

Bench Body general manager Jude Ong says the company tries to bring down the level of pilferage by investing in anti-theft devices.

Bulkier items are tagged, and these devices set off an alarm if these pass through the store's doors, alerting the personnel and the security guards to possible shoplifting.

Ong says that the mere presence of these anti-theft devices already go a long way in discouraging would-be shoplifters from even trying to filch products.

Ong adds that Bench Body also conducts regular inventory checks, so that inventories are compared with actual sales reports to detect significant discrepancies.

"We use an internally-developed software to check sales and inventory in each store. Then we also do physical visits at least once a quarter to check on operations," he says in an interview.

Ong says these systems have worked well to prevent losses from eating so much into the profits.

He, however, says that the biggest challenge confronting Bench Body, and Philippine retailers in general, is theft from within the company.

"There are 1,001 ways to steal, and we try to learn from each one. But they always come up with something new," he says.

He shares incidents where the cashier will punch one item into the cash register, even if the buyer—who is either a friend or relative—actually got 10. The rest is then charged to theft or pilferage.

KidzStation

Filipinos are such family-oriented people that for most, a weekend is not complete without going to a toy store, such as KidzStation, as a treat to a child or a grandchild.

This trend keeps toy retailers' cash registers ringing, but it also brings with it the headache of making sure that nobody goes out of the store without paying for what they took off the shelves.

Anton Gonzalez, who heads the operations of the KidzStation stores in the Philippines, says in an interview that more than investing in the latest alarm systems, it is the posting of security guards that has proven to be the most effective means of combating losses.

"In the Philippines, the best way to control theft is to have a lot of security guards especially for me, because the store has a big entrance. I have about three or four guards. I also have one at the area where customers leave their bags," Gonzalez says.

He says it was difficult for KidzStation to go the way of using security tags because the store sells a lot of small items, thus, it would not be feasible to put individual tags on thousands of individual units that are displayed at any one time.

As for internal pilferage, Gonzalez says the best way to prevent it is to seriously go through the hiring process to make sure that only the trustworthy became employees and managers.

Together with a proper software system to track inventory, delivery and sales, losses are kept to an acceptable level of between 1-3 percent of sales.

Gonzalez stresses that it is very important to keep losses to a minimum because with margins being so thin, losing over 3 percent will spell disaster for a company.

"If losses go over 1-3 percent, something is wrong with the systems," Gonzalez adds.

Coffee Bean

Although Coffee Bean and Tea Co. does not sell too many retail items within easy reach of customers, preventing losses remains an integral part of business operations.

Walden Chu, who heads the local company that got the Coffee Bean franchise, says that margins are squeezed in the world of coffee chains because of intense competition. So much so that the value of the profits can be greatly influenced by how well a company makes sure that all products that are sold translate to money coming into the company.

Since the products are not easily within reach, Coffee Bean largely guards against internal theft.

Chu says there are many ways of skimming products in the kitchen and the commissary, thus, the company invested in a software system that allows management to check against an "unacceptable" variance between sales and inventory figures.

"We take retail inventory every day. Some do it monthly, but we do it every day so that it is easy to reconcile the figures. We also have wastage logs done weekly, and if the level goes over an acceptable level, that's the time we come in to investigate," Chu says.

Chu says that more than systems, taking the time to hire the right people is the most effective and permanent means of preventing losses from within.

"At the end of the day, you will still end up having losses no matter how good the controls are, if there really is an intent to steal," he says.

Chu, thus, says that he takes it upon himself to interview practically every one who will work for the company.

Not only does hiring the right people translate to excellent customer service, he says, it also keeps losses down to a minimum.

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Bank scores wins in asset management

EQUITABLE PCI Bank has continued a streak of winning performances in the asset management business, sustaining double-digit gains in business volume and gaining recognition as the country's top manager of corporate retirement funds in 2004.

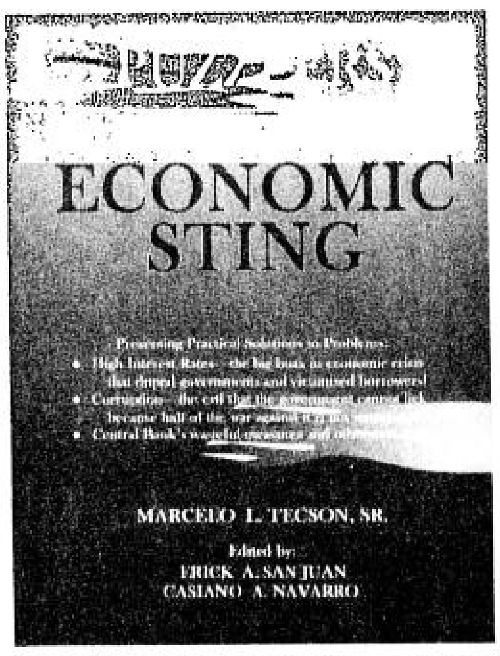
The country's third largest bank, with consolidated assets of P309 billion, kept up a brisk pace in its trust banking business to post trust assets of P101 billion in March, up 18 percent from a year earlier and more than double the figure three years ago.

Marvin V. Fausto, senior vice president and head of EPCIBank's trust banking group, attributed the pick-up to innovative new products appealing to individual investors and his group's proven capability to deliver the best investment returns in the market.

This track record is underscored by EPCIBank's topping of the 2004 performance survey conducted by global consulting firm Watson Wyatt. The bank ranked No. 1 among fund managers handling at least five funds with full discretion and was shown to have provided the best returns to retirement funds.

Wyatt has performed its Survey of Investment Performance (SIP) since 1985 to monitor the health of retirement funds in the country. As of 2004, there were 170 funds in the survey with combined plan assets of P32 billion.

EPCIBank has consistently ranked among the top performers for the past 3 and 5 years, delivering average net returns that beat yields on risk-free T-bills, Phisix, and other market benchmarks. The long-term growth of a company's retirement fund is essential in ensuring that employee benefits are settled when they fall due.



MARCELO L. Tecson, a CPA with years of experience in the Phinma and PNOC groups of companies has written a book that suggests some practical measures against widespread corruption, recurring high interest rates, lingering economic sluggishness and cases of poor governance—for the attention of players and stakeholders in pursuit of economic growth.

Ex-PNB chair heads back to roots to build fortunes

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

A ROLLING stone gathers no moss. Investment banker Francisco Dizon is going back to his roots hunting for value and building fortunes after capping a four-year stint as chair of the country's fifth largest lender, Philippine National Bank.

Dizon is planning to put up a new P500-million venture capital fund through his investment bank and financial advisory services firm, Pacific Northstar Inc.

"The new fund will focus on companies that thrive on the country's biggest asset—human resources—which is our main strength in the call center and other business process outsourcing businesses," says Dizon who has cast a moist eye on at least two start-ups focusing on legal research and processing of accounts payables for American and other foreign corporations.

The new fund is nearly five times the P105-million capital that Dizon and his associates had when they formed Pacific Northstar's first venture capital fund in 1996: Project Quest Corp.

By next year, Project Quest's three major holdings—BPO International, Point Quest Technologies and Global Stride—will have combined sales of a little over P1 billion. Project Quest acquired BPO International, the Philippines' largest outsourcing service provider on finance and accounting and payroll and benefits administration, from SGV & Co. last year.

FRANCISCO Dizon

"SGV was rationalizing its operations due to regulatory changes in the US that affected its affiliate Ernst & Young Global and we grabbed the opportunity to take over its viable outsourcing business," Dizon says.

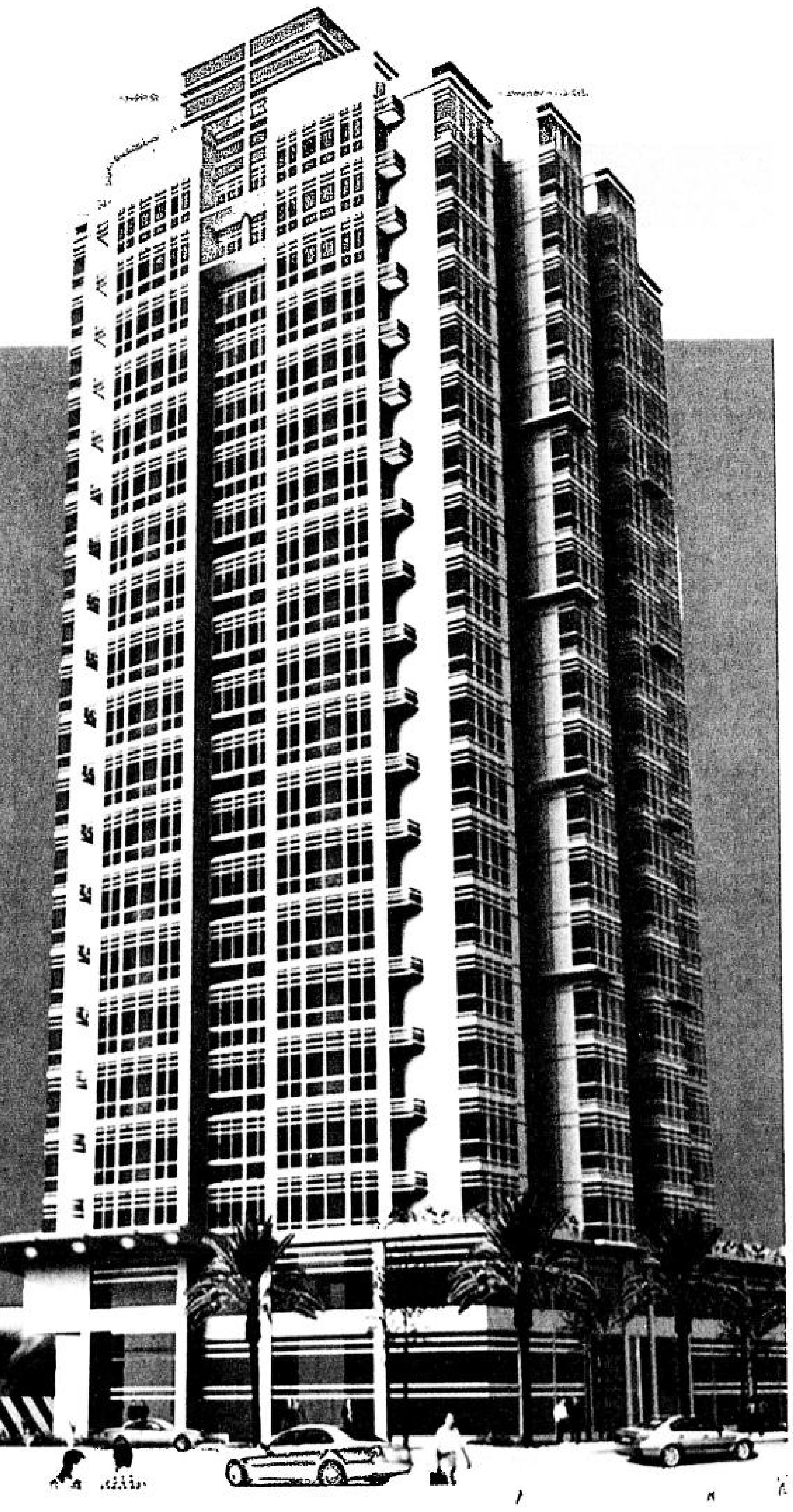
Dizon says BPO International, which has 400 staff accounts, is expected to double its sales to P300 million by next year Dizon said Pacific Northstar teamed up with a group of software developers to form Point Quest Technologies in 2002 to boost its export business. Point Quest specializes in software maintenance, programming and development and the major US airlines are its main clients. Point Quest's turnover is expected to hit $5 million next year or more than double its current sales of $2 million Pacific Northstar also has a stake in Global Stride, a call center focusing on outbound services for trade magazines and specialty publications.

Since acquiring the firm in 2003, Dizon says the call center has tripled its capacity from 200 seats to 600 seats. Global Stride is expected to jack up its sales to $10 million next year from $6 million this year.

"Project Quest will be on its tenth year in 2006 and we believe the time is ripe for another venture capital fund," says Dizon. "I guess there is no better time for me to move on and face a new challenge." Before his tour of duty as PNB chair, Dizon had served as president of Asian Banking Corp. (1990 to 1994) and president and chief executive officer of Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. (1997 to 2001). Dizon says he wanted to move on as early as last year when PNB posted its first black ink income statement in years but he was prevailed to stay on for at least a year by both the government and Lucio Tan sides in the 11-member board.

"I was hoping to stay this long to make an impact," says Dizon who cited the debt restructuring of National Steel Corp. and the sale of P5 billion in non-performing loans to Bank of America among the key achievements of PNB in the last four years. Although his duties were limited to the board level, Dizon says this has made his work load no less taxing. Aside from poring over the huge pile of paperwork involving the bank's important transactions, Dizon says he has to keep the board members as one whole unit.

"The board is evenly split between the government and the Lucio Tan group [both have a 45-percent stake each in PNB]. It was an activist board and it could have easily been a contentious one. But we decided to keep it together, work out situations where there were differences of opinion," Dizon says. Dizon's post was filled up last week by PNB director Florencia Gozon-Tarriela, sister of GMA Broadcasting Corp.'s Felipe Gozon. "I think the board is in good hands with her [Tarriela]," says Dizon.



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LIFESTYLE

MONDAY **ARTS & BOOKS** ◉ TUESDAY **FITNESS** ◉ WEDNESDAY **2B**

Culture for tourists, not for Filipinos

MANY Filipinos and the local tourism industry remain boxed into the old "packaged tourism destination mode," an approach that herds tourists into buses, takes them from airport to beach resort, provides a few

CULTURE/C3

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

The 'WOW.' approach debases the Philippines, packaging culture and heritage for quick dollars

AUIS Church in Bohol

Active kids. Happy kids.

This summer, McDonald's kept your kids busy with different kid-friendly programs designed to develop their personalities, improve their interaction skills and broaden their knowledge on the environment.

McDonald's KIDS ON THE GO

CAMP EXPLORE
The importance of environmental awareness, caring and understanding was lectured in a three-day educational outdoor kid-friendly camp event in Mt. Purro Nature Camp in Calawis, Antipolo last May 16 to 18.

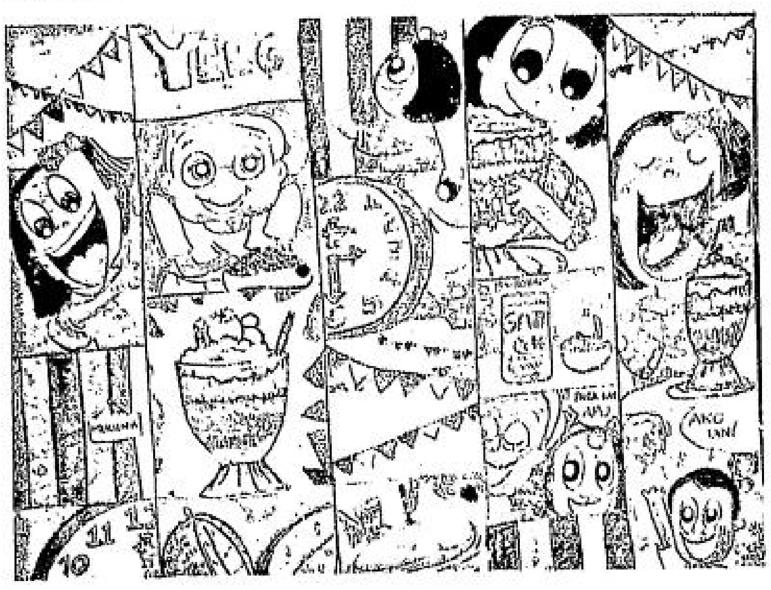
ABC's OF SWIMMING
Kids had their last chance to bask under the summer sun in Ultra last May 21. The basics of swimming and other forms of water safety were taught in special pool activities that kids enjoyed.

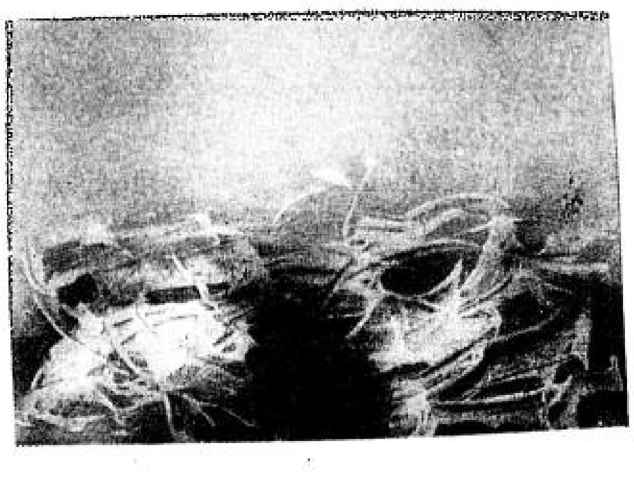
KIDDIE CREW WORKSHOP
Over 8,000 kids graduated last May 29 in Aliw Theatre after finishing a program of fun and learning in the stores. Good values such as the importance of cleanliness, orderliness and the value of responsibility were learned first-hand as a McDonald's Kiddie Crew member.

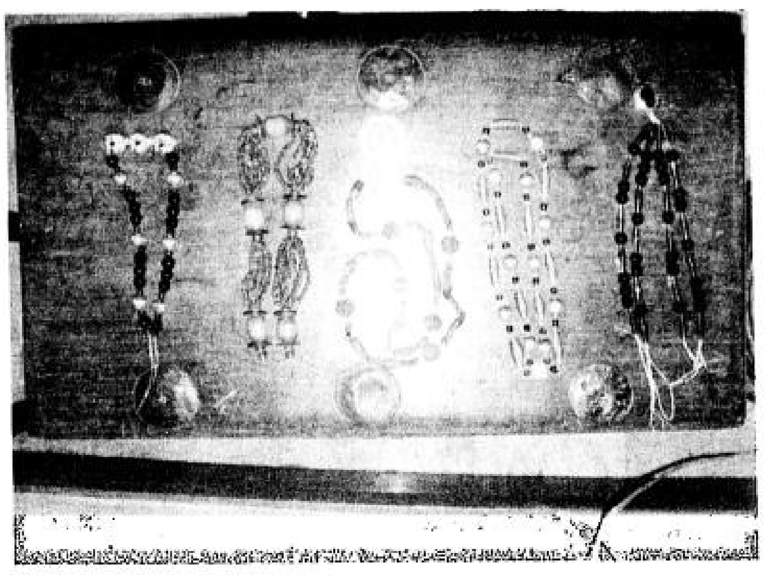
adidas STREETBALL CHALLENGE
The values of sportsmanship, competitiveness, teamwork and discipline were easily taught in a sport kids just love to play. This activity is still ongoing with provincial sorties lined up and the national finals to be held in Manila on July 30 to 31 at the Festival Mall.

Watch out for more McDonald's kid-oriented activities supporting children's well-being and balanced lifestyle.

love ko 'to


CARICATURE by Amihan Doctor


PAINTING by Yasmin Doctor


JEWELRY by Luningning and Lualhati Doctor

Like father, like daughters

By Dexter R. Matilla
Contributor

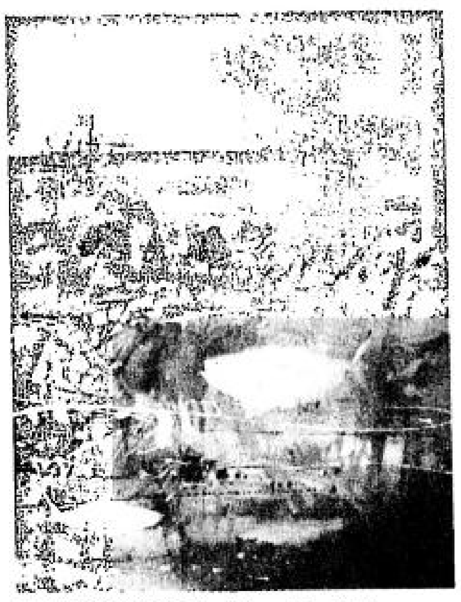
THE SAYING that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree stands true for multi-talented Filipino artist Edgar Doctor and his four daughters—Luningning, Lualhati, Amihan and Yasmin, as they took center stage in their first family exhibit, "Glimpses," at the Philippine Center in New York City.

From May 23-June 3, New York City witnessed the creative genius of the Doctor family, from Edgar's sculptures and paintings to his daughters' skills in the visual arts, photography and jewelry design.

Over the years, Edgar Doctor's metal sculptures and still-life paintings have been exhibited all over the country and in countries including Singapore, Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, and the United States.

According to Doctor, "art is neither a profession nor a vocation—it is life itself. Without it, I'm nothing."

For the exhibit, Edgar's well-known style of bringing life to the canvas, as well as sculptures, was in full view.


WATERCOLOR by Edgar Doctor

Stills, landscapes, and his piscean verve are brought to life in vibrant watercolors, such as "Old Manila," "Riverbanks" and "Rockfish."

His creations earned him recognition in international competitions in France and in Chile in the same way that his sculptures won accolades from the Society of Philippine Sculptors and the Art Association of the Philippines. Because of this, Edgar was included in the 2000 Outstanding Artists and Designers of the 20th Century by the International Biographical Centre in Cambridge, England.

Sisters act

Taking after him, of course, are his daughters—Luningning, 33, and Lualhati, 27, Amihan, 24, and Yasmin, 21.

Luningning, a market research and product planning and control analyst for Rustan's Marketing Corporation, fancies designing beaded and precious stone necklaces.

She also does photography along with Lualhati, a research executive for the advertising agency, Campaigns and Grey.

As kids, Luningning and Lualhati had been exposed to jewelry as their mother and grandmother had a vast collection of beaded jewelry. Because of this, according to them, they were able to appreciate the importance of heritage and antiquity.

They make it a point, however, to not produce similar pieces but instead make each one as unique as possible. "It kind of loses its rarity," Lualhati explained.

As much as possible, the Doctor siblings prefer to use antique and one-of-a-kind beads and pendants for their pieces.

Their interest is not limited to this, however. Luningning and Lualhati enjoy taking photographs as much, with the former preferring landscapes while the latter is more into framing the human form.

"There's more drama," Lualhati explained.

EDGAR with daughters (clockwise from left) Luningning, Amihan, Lualhati and Yasmin, and nieces

On the other hand, Amihan and Yasmin seem to have taken after their father's interest in paintings. Amihan is a BS Psychology graduate at the University of Santo Tomas and currently pursuing a degree in Nursing at the Philippine Women's University while Yasmin is an AB Journalism student, also in UST.

Amihan gets her kick out of drawing caricatures of friends and family.

Aside from that, she also finds solace in writing poems, having participated in poetry clubs as a grade schooler, and she was also a member of the St. Scholastica's Creative Writers Guild and the Varsitarian, UST's official student publication.

Yasmin, meanwhile, is the closest, artistically-wise, to her father, specializing in textured artworks with the use of acrylic and spray paint.

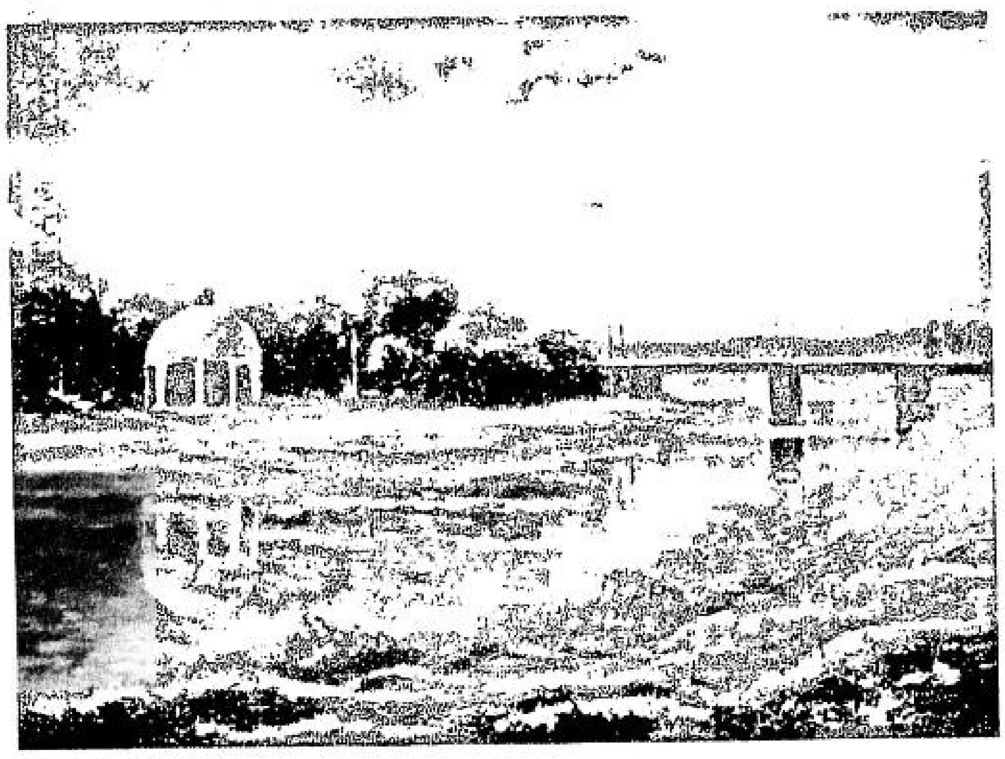
"Glimpses" will be the second exhibit for Amihan and Yasmin after participating in an exhibit in 2004 for Ang-INK (Ang Illustrador ng Kabataan), titled "Meme Na."

With the realization of "Glimpses" comes the affirmation that art is alive in the Doctor family.

Amihan said art has always been fun and interesting for the family of artists.

"It has to be," she said. Luningning couldn't agree more. "It gives us a certain sense of fulfillment and meaning."

Camille de la Rosa exhibit in Malaysia


"MARIKINA River"

CAMILLE de la Rosa has opened an art exhibit at Hilton Hotel in Petalling Jaya, Malaysia, in connection with the 107th anniversary of Philippine Independence. The show is organized by the Philippine Embassy in cooperation with Philippine Airlines and the Filipino community in Kuala Lumpur.

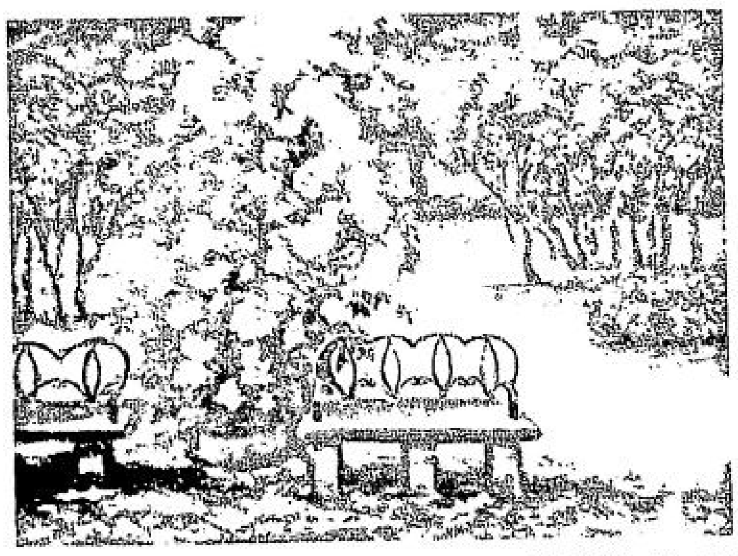
The young impressionist shows her new works featuring Intramuros and Marikina Riverbank landscapes.

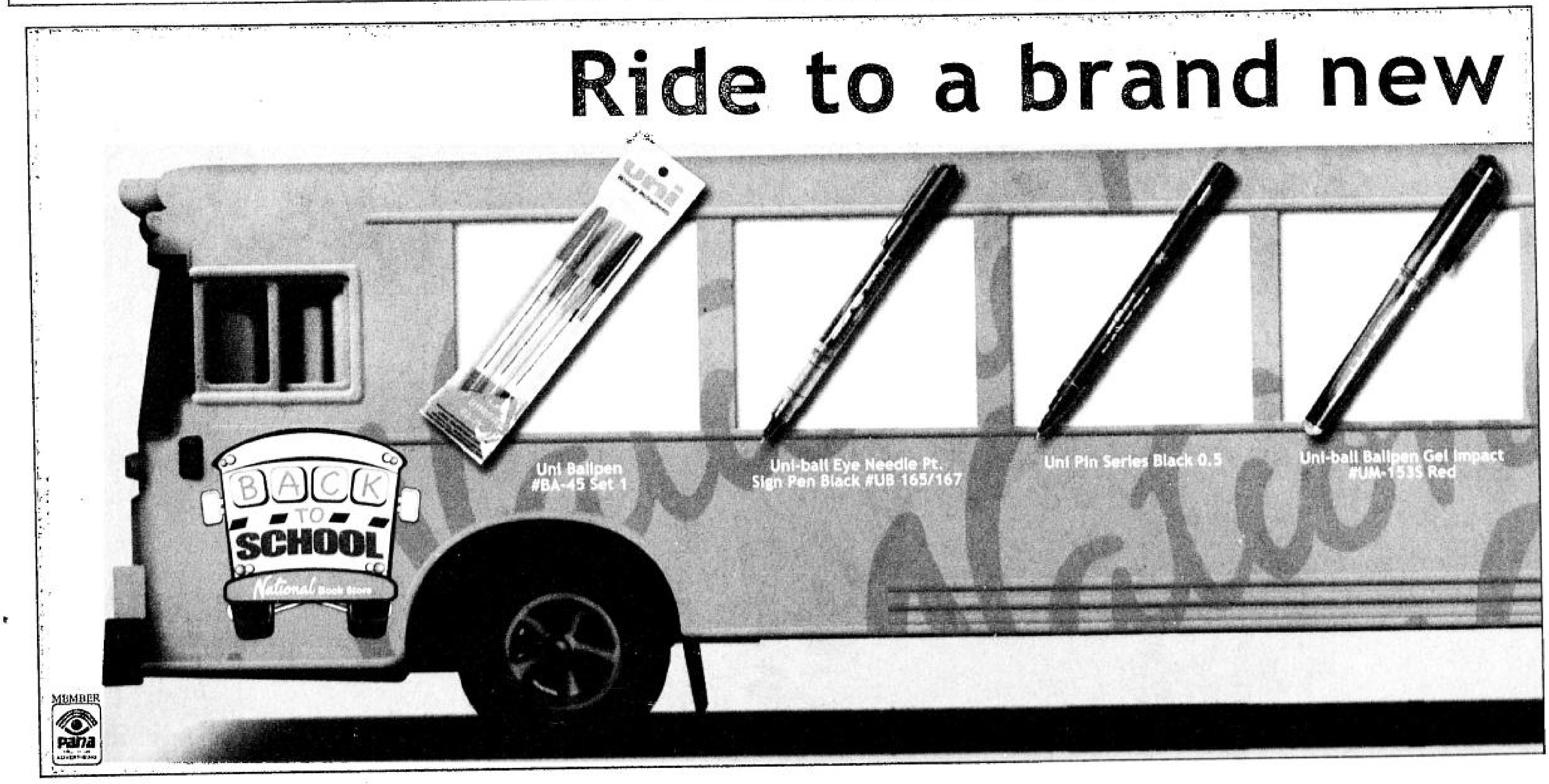
In Manila, Camille de la Rosa's more recent works can be viewed at Gallery 828, 4/L, Shangri-La Mall, Mandaluyong City.

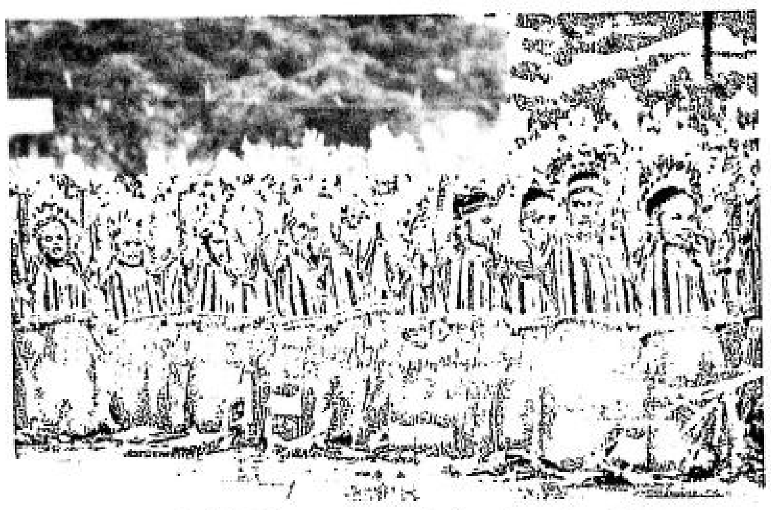
Cutting the ceremonial ribbon in her Malaysia exhibit are Ambassador Luis T. Cruz and Michael Nagel, general manager of Hilton Hotel.

Aside from the exhibit, other cultural activities at the hotel from June 5-12 are the Filipino food festival, local products and tourism showcase, Independence Day bazaar, medical mission and charity gala dinner featuring Jose Marie Chan.

Camille's exhibit is until June 19. Visit www.camilledelarosa.com.


"FORT Santiago" II


Ride to a brand new



SINULOG Festival in Cebu, an example of packaged culture

BACLAYON Church in Bohol

VIGAN Church

Culture for tourists, not for Filipinos

From page C1

THE PRISTINE waters of Loboc River, the place where the movie "Panaghoy Sa Suba" was filmed

JOSEPH AGCAOILI

CALLE Crisologo in the old Mestizo District of Vigan

hours' visit to selected "tourism destinations" that are quick pops to cultural sites or monuments, leading to a dinner-show of "native" songs and dances.

Everything is packaged, from transportation, accommodation and Philippine culture.

The tourism "destination" approach crafted sites packaged with that "WOW" tourist appeal. The destinations follow a pattern. Places are decked out in fiesta atmosphere where open-air stages present cultural shows regularly and where a network of souvenir and food stalls packed along both sides of pedestrian streets compete for attention and sales.

Commercial and artificial, the destinations fail to express what is true in Filipino culture. Nor do they offer a realistic view of both Filipino history and way of life.

Nevertheless, the "tourist destination" image persists. Many Philippine locations try to concoct either their own versions or launch tourism events. A few have succeeded.

One of the most popular festivals in the country, the "Sinulog" of Cebu, based on a local religious ritual once little-known outside the city, was launched in the early 1980's to boost the city's tourism industry. Twenty years later, the festival has become such a success that people think it is a centuries-old tradition.

The province of Bohol, on the other hand, took stock of its natural and cultural assets—pristine rivers and beaches, whale and dolphin reserves, colonial towns, old churches with their treasures and religious traditions still intact, the internationally acclaimed Loboc Childrens' Choir, local craft and cuisine, and other resources.

The government-religious-private sector cooperation preserved the provincial heritage, promoting the uniqueness of Bohol as the basis for an extremely successful community-based tourism program.

To achieve the increased numbers of foreign arrivals has always been the government target, claiming to promote Philippines as a cultural tourism destination. Still lacking are more programs to document and preserve vanishing traditions and built heritage, for instance, to show that cultural revival and preservation is for the Filipino and not for tourism dollars.

Activities in the cultural area could learn from the Bohol cultural experience whose primary aim was to preserve the unique heritage of the province for the benefit of local residents. Tourism grew as a secondary benefit of the successful cultural preservation program.

The cultural sector has made up for the lack of cultural tourism activities with a number of creative, local-level programs aimed at establishing awareness that preserving cultural heritage should be primarily for improving the quality of life of Filipino communities and not just for tourist consumption.

Historically correct tours

Organizations such as the Committee on Monuments and Sites of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and KaiVigan have commissioned historically correct tour guide scripts and walking tour maps for Intramuros and Vigan. They have also trained locals as guides.

The Bohol Arts and Cultural Heritage Council went a step beyond historical research. It actually mapped out a walking tour of Tagbilaran and environs.

The programs have paid off. Vigan and Bohol are popular destinations primarily visited by local tourists. Both have successful tourism programs based on the conservation of their heritage that are run by the local community.

An unexpected phenomenon in heritage-based cultural tourism grew out of a walking tour project established by the Heritage Conservation Society (HCS). As an activity for stimulating heritage awareness, the HCS organized weekly walks in Manila heritage districts. First conducted by professors or cultural experts, young guides eventually took over the activity.

The young guides enlivened historical fact with humor, communicated passion for urban built heritage and commitment to its preservation, made heritage alive with costumes, anecdotes, folk history and food that related to different historic quarters in the city.

Their lively walks gained instant popularity. Manileños and expatriate residents stopped taking Manila for granted, rediscovered the wealth of texture in the city and became aware of the need for conservation.

The two leading Manila streetwalkers are Carlos Celdran and Ivan ManDy whose tours are booked solid. They have become cult heroes, darlings of local and international media.

The Time (Asia) Magazine featured Celdran recently: "If you take time to explore it, Manila pays rich dividends. One of the best ways to get to know the city is through the half-day walking tours given by the garrulous Carlos Celdran... [who] offers up rich narratives that are by turns gossipy (his account of Imelda Marcos' rise and fall is hilarious) and compelling (the description of a bombed-out Manila, at the end of World War II, is unforgettable). They're also filled with the kind of insight that only a native raconteur can provide."

Tours led by Celdran and ManDy change perceptions and alter perspectives. "I can't change the way Manila looks," Celdran admits. "But I can change the way you look at Manila."

Personalized tours are quickly becoming a new trend in Manila and other Philippine cities, giving the lesson that it is easier to change tourism perceptions from the ground up.

Local individuals, rather than the government, now provide increasingly viable models for community-based tourism programs, causing a shift in the cultural tourism paradigm.

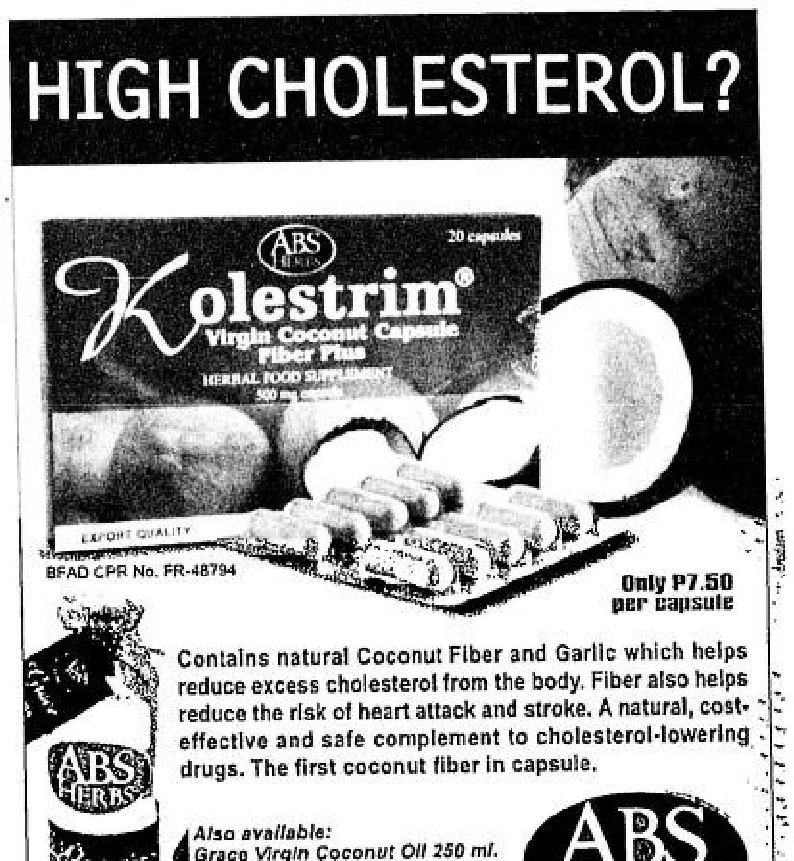
In time, hopefully the new vision could evolve into a primary activity in the country's tourism program, one that instills a missing pride of place in the Filipino and gives the tourist a personal contact with Filipino culture,

Heritage watch

Carlos Celdran will introduce you to his idiosyncratic, vibrant, and surprising Manila. E-mail celdrantours@hotmail.com or www.cendrantours.blogspot.com Ivan ManDy tours you around the Chinese Cemetery in La Loma and makes Tsinoy taste come alive with food tours through Binondo. Visit www.oldmanilawalks.blogspot.com

"Contemporary Art Exchange" at Lumière Restaurant (G/L, LV Locsin Bldg., Ayala cor Makati Avenues) will be from 11 a.m.-7 p.m. on Sunday, June 19. The whole-day art bazaar features affordable works by contemporary Filipino and foreign artists costing below P10,000.

E-mail afvillalon@hotmail.com



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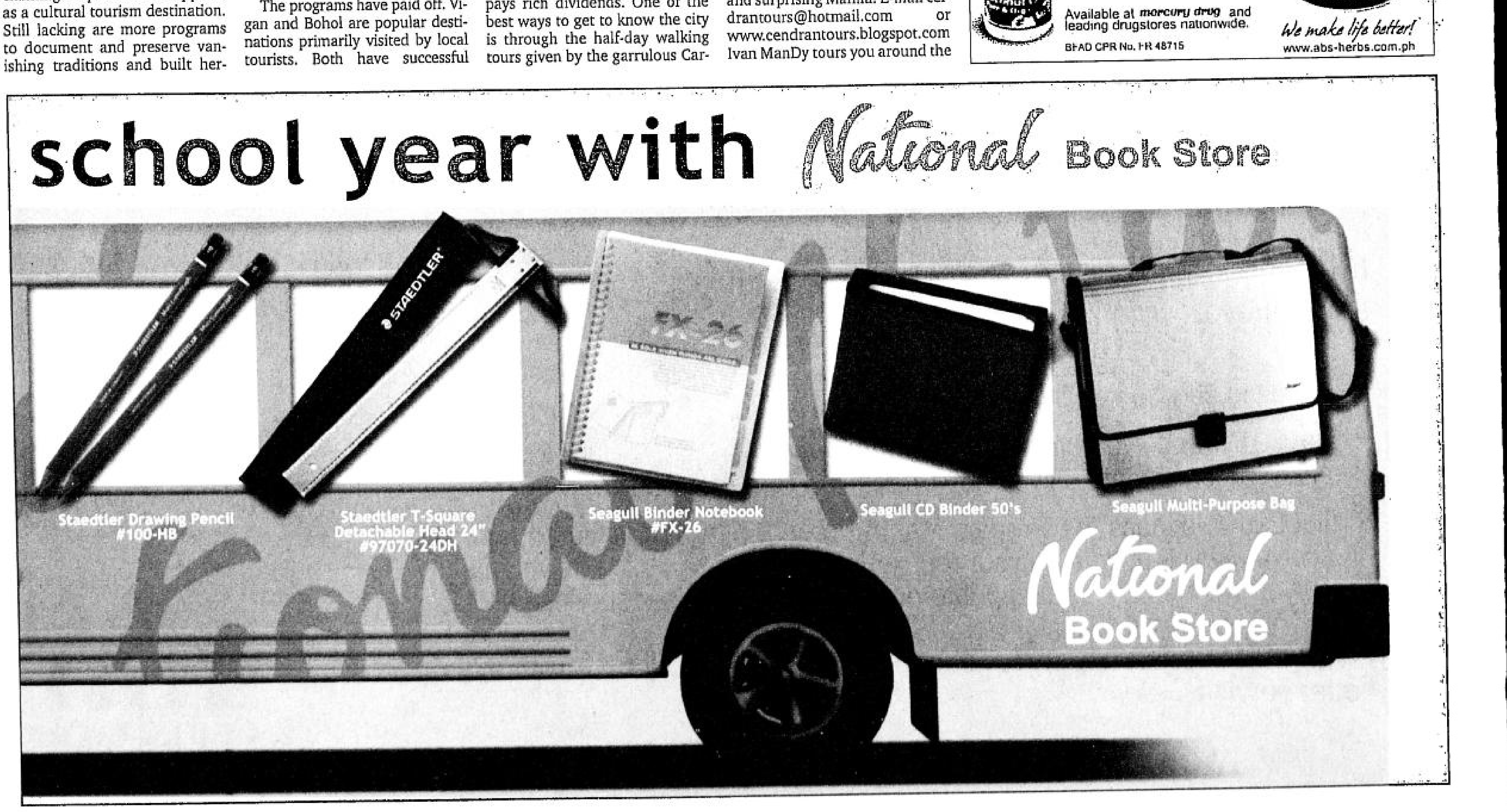

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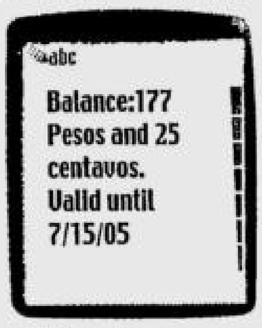

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Note: Date reflects the validity of your account

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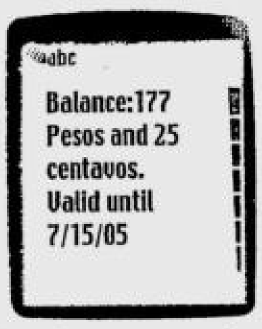

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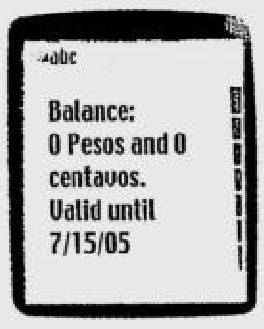
Balance:177 Pesos and 25 centavos. Valid until 7/15/05

b. If you don't have regular load:



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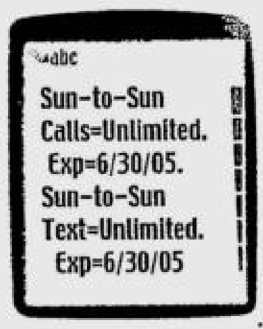

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Sun-to-Sun Calls=Unlimited. Exp=6/30/05. Sun-to-Sun Text=Unlimited. Exp=6/30/05

3. If you have 24/7 Text Unlimited

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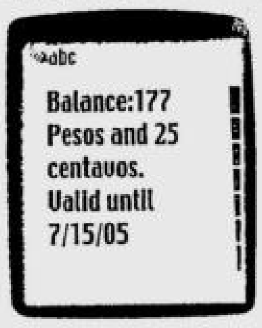

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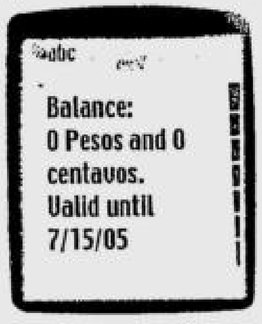

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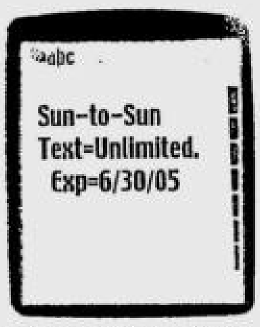

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Sun-to-Sun Text=Unlimited. Exp=6/30/05

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- Dial 221 to receive a voice update on your regular load balance. As soon as you hang up, you will receive a text update on your 24/7 Unlimited service validity.
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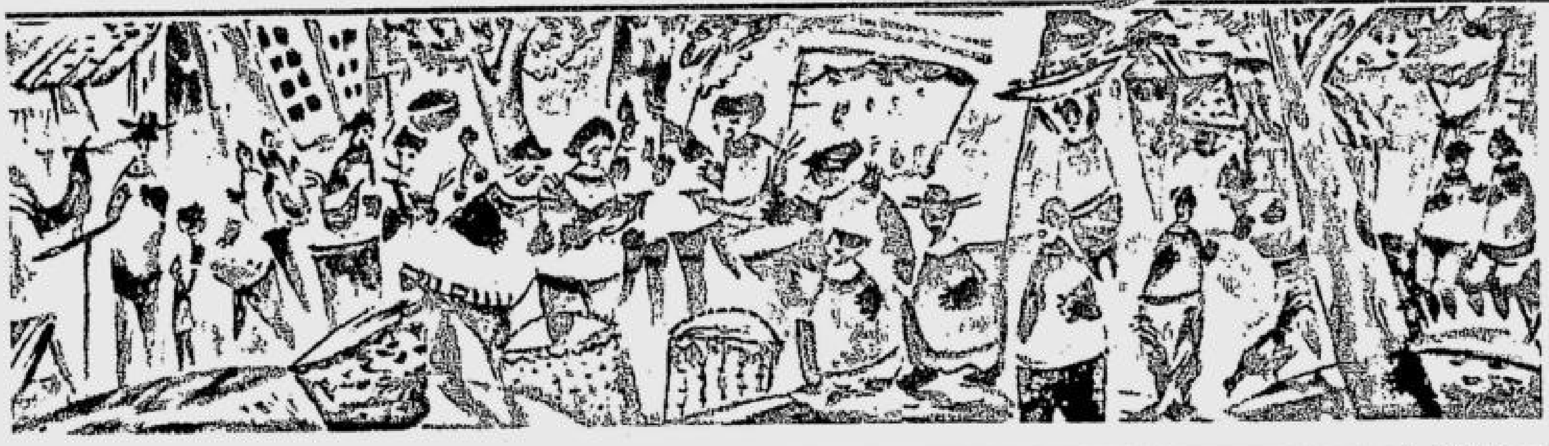


"SA PULA"

His is a childlike sensibility that is not dampened by sobering news. He is unfalteringly bright

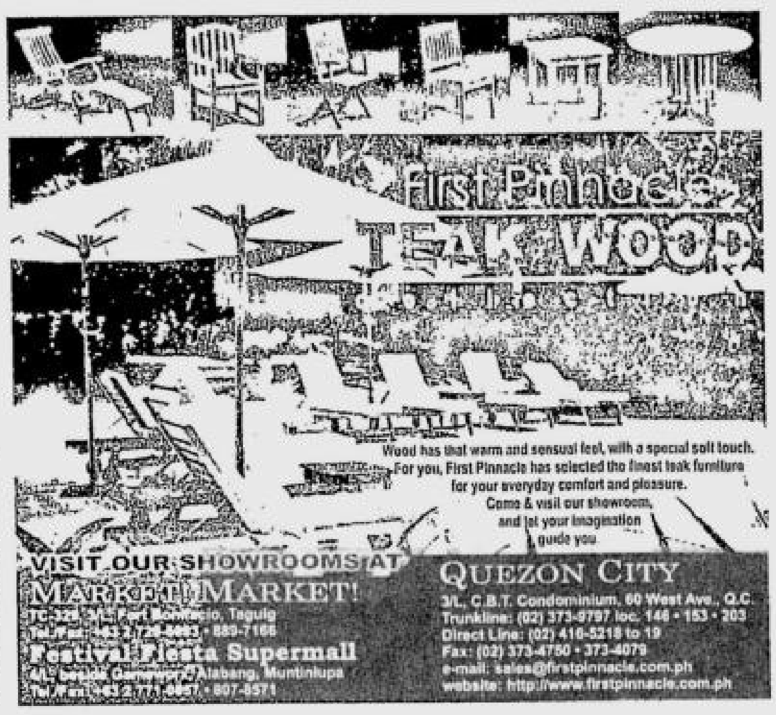
The guileless art of Anthony Fermin

By Lito B. Zulueta

THERE is no guile in the works of Cebuano artist Anthony Fermin. His new show, "Kasadya" (at the One Luna Gallery in Eastwood starting tomorrow), is a collection of typically joyous Filipino scenes in joyous colors that somehow paint the mood and sensibility of an artist who is unabashedly optimistic. It is tempting to call his art "naïf." At the least, it can be called guileless and unpretentious.

The clue is in the title of the exhibit. *Kasadya* is Ilonggo for "*masaya*" or "happy." "Happiness is every people's dream," Fermin said, who seeks to record the happy scenes he has seen during his tours of Negros Occidental in the new show. For such a temper, it is predictable that the colors the

THE GUILELESS/ D3



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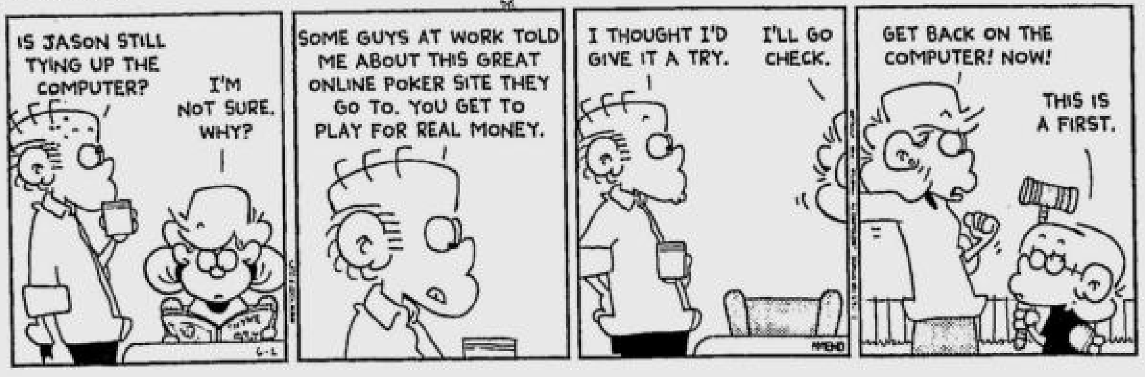
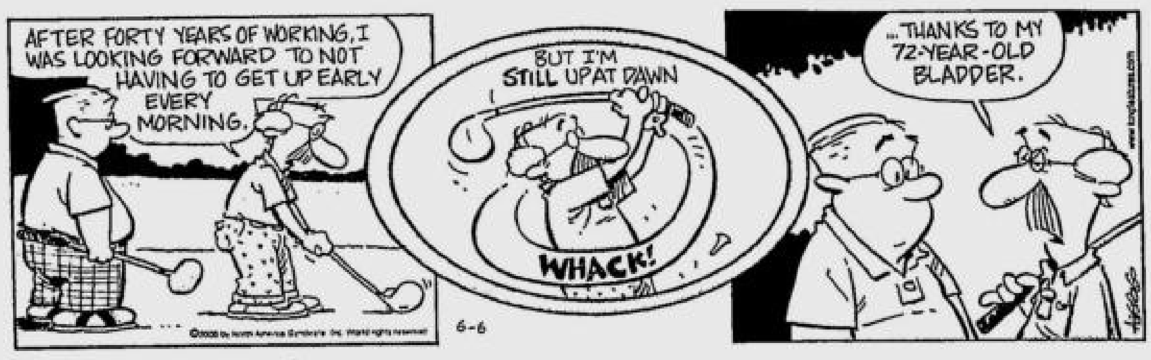
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


IS JASON STILL TYING UP THE COMPUTER?
I'M NOT SURE. WHY?
SOME GUYS AT WORK TOLD ME ABOUT THIS GREAT ONLINE POKER SITE THEY GO TO. YOU GET TO PLAY FOR REAL MONEY.
I THOUGHT I'D GIVE IT A TRY.
I'LL GO CHECK.
GET BACK ON THE COMPUTER! NOW!
THIS IS A FIRST.

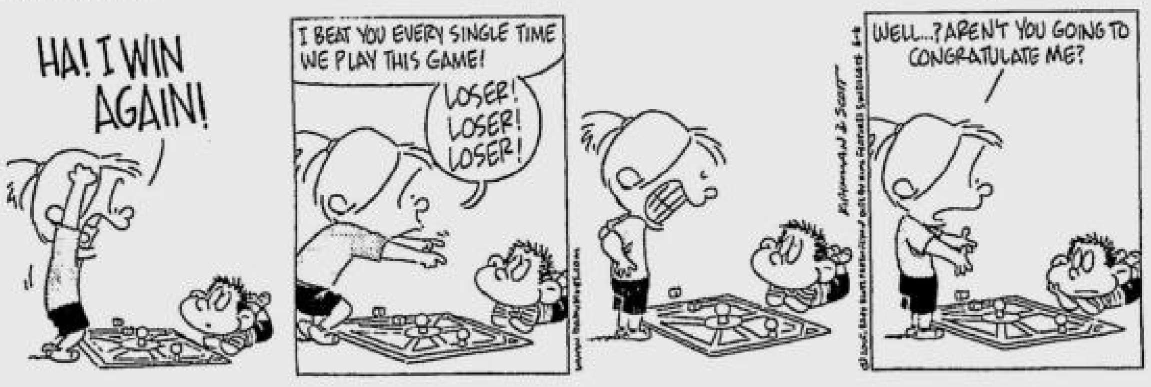
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


AFTER FORTY YEARS OF WORKING, I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO NOT HAVING TO GET UP EARLY EVERY MORNING.
BUT I'M STILL UP AT DAWN
WHACK!
...THANKS TO MY 72-YEAR-OLD BLADDER.
6-6

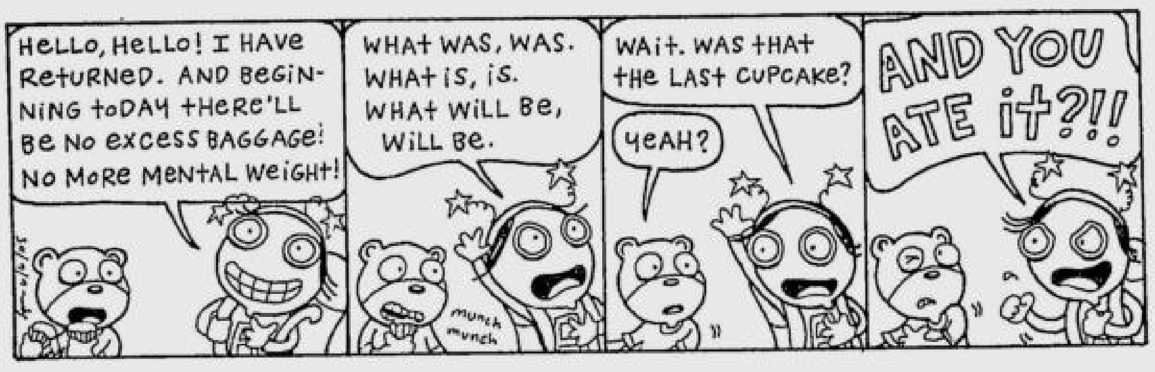
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


HA! I WIN AGAIN!
I BEAT YOU EVERY SINGLE TIME WE PLAY THIS GAME!
LOSER! LOSER! LOSER!
WELL...? AREN'T YOU GOING TO CONGRATULATE ME?

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


HELLO, HELLO! I HAVE RETURNED. AND BEGINNING TODAY THERE'LL BE NO EXCESS BAGGAGE! NO MORE MENTAL WEIGHT!
WHAT WAS, WAS. WHAT IS, IS. WHAT WILL BE, WILL BE.
munch munch
WAIT. WAS THAT THE LAST CUPCAKE?
YEAH?
AND YOU ATE IT?!!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're extremely artistic ard creative. You need to express yourself to others. You have far-out ideas because you are a visionary. Others consider you to be bizarre at times, but you're just exploring your dreams and fantasies. This year, you begin a completely new cycle in your life. All kinds of possibilities will present themselves to you. Birthdate of: Robert Englund, actor; Sandra Bernhard, comedienne; Staci Keanan, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Today is a New Moon. These are always wonderful times to make resolutions. Try to improve your relations with siblings and relatives.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is a good day to look at your financial scene. Figure out how much money you owe and how much money you earn. What can you do to feel better about your finances?

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): The New Moon is in your sign today. (This is the only one all year.) This is a perfect opportunity for you to think about how to improve your appearance and your image.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You might want to get in touch with your spiritual values today. No matter what your beliefs, you do believe in something.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): How can you improve your relations with the friends and groups in your life? Generally, the best way to improve relating to others is to be friendly!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This New Moon is at high noon in your chart. That means this is the day to think about your career path and the direction your life is headed.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Is there any extra training or education that you can get that will improve the quality of your life? This is a good question to ask yourself today.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): It's impossible to live in this world without having to learn to compromise with the values of others. Others don't always see things as you do. And vice versa.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): What can you do to improve your closest relationships? Remember—you must be as good for your partner as he or she is for you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Now is the time to think about how to improve your job or your work habits. Perhaps you can enrich your relations with co-workers?

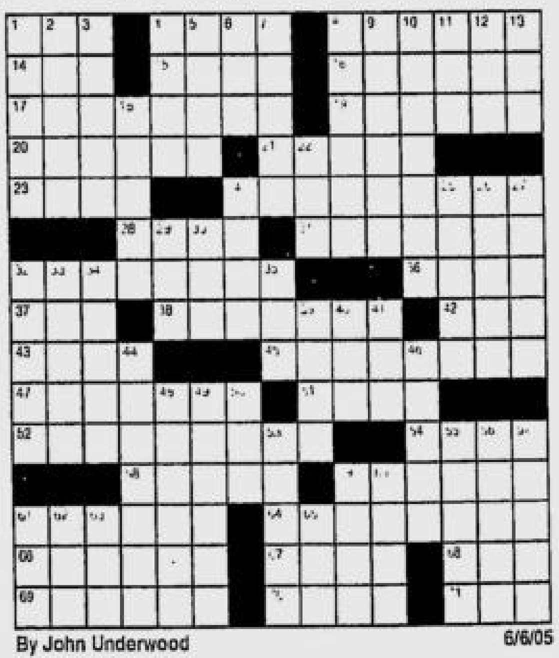
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): We need balance in our lives. We can't work all the time; we can't play all the time. Think about how to get a balance between fun and productivity in your life.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Today's New Moon offers you an opportunity to make improvements to where you live and to your family dynamic. What can you do to make your home life more cozy and welcoming for everyone?

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Pester
4 Part of LP
8 Counter in a Chinese restaurant?
14 Bustle
15 Heel attachment
16 Tasks
17 TV set
19 Fit for farming
20 Preoccupy completely
21 Lawsuits
23 Porter or stout
24 Library supporter?
28 Skiers' ride
31 Sideways
32 Frogs, toads, newts, etc.
36 Beach mound
37 Hush-hush org.
38 Portable with woofers
42 Links org.
43 Outback birds
45 Arranges in sequence
47 Brush up on
51 Craps option
52 The sticks
54 Lima's nation
58 "Butterfield 8" author
59 Ho Chi Minh City, once
61 Portuguese islands
64 Military training center
66 Andy Warhol's genre
67 Disentangle
68 Actress Ruby
69 Flips
70 Dark, rich soil
71 One of the Trinity

DOWN
1 Mr. Moneybags
2 Pueblo material
3 Silly person
4 Mil. invasion vessels
5 Creative work
6 Crux
7 Hellenic: pref.
8 Seward's Folly
9 Least adorned
10 Red in the face
11 Male swan
12 WWW address
13 Compass dir.
18 Pullman bed
22 Major ISP
24 Vivacity
25 Explode
26 Hope of Hollywood
27 Dog doggers
29 Tucker's partner
30 Blood class. sys.
32 Sour, formerly
33 Outmoded copier, briefly
34 Sao __, Brazil
35 TCM rival
39 Moves to the beat
40 Pay add-on?
41 Big sizes, briefly
44 Seville ladies
46 Savory jelly
48 Stick
49 Oven-cooks
50 Big name in ATMs
53 Capital of Afghanistan
55 Gadzooks!
56 Montague teenager
57 Free from a sty
59 Word with pop
60 Tiny amount
61 Inclined
62 Monkey house address
63 Goddess of the harvest
65 Sean Lennon's mom



By John Underwood
New York, NY

6/6/05

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

A	N	S	W	E	R	■	A	P	P	E	T	I	T	E
M	A	L	O	N	E	■	M	A	U	N	A	L	O	A
B	R	A	N	D	S	■	S	P	E	C	T	E	R	S
U	R	N	■	L	I	E	■	P	R	O	R	A	T	E
L	A	D	■	E	D	S	■	■	T	R	A	C	E	D
A	T	E	■	S	E	T	■	P	O	E	■	■	■	■
T	I	R	E	S	■	E	A	R	■	S	E	G	A	L
E	V	E	L	■	■	E	R	F	■	■	N	E	N	E
S	E	R	F	S	■	M	E	D	■	M	A	N	N	A
■	■	■	■	E	S	S	■	A	D	A	■	T	E	D
D	I	E	S	E	L	■	■	T	I	I	■	L	A	G
I	R	O	N	M	A	N	■	E	N	L	■	E	L	L
R	E	S	I	S	T	O	R	■	A	R	A	B	I	A
K	N	I	T	T	E	R	S	■	R	A	V	E	N	S
S	E	N	S	O	R	I	A	■	S	T	I	N	G	S

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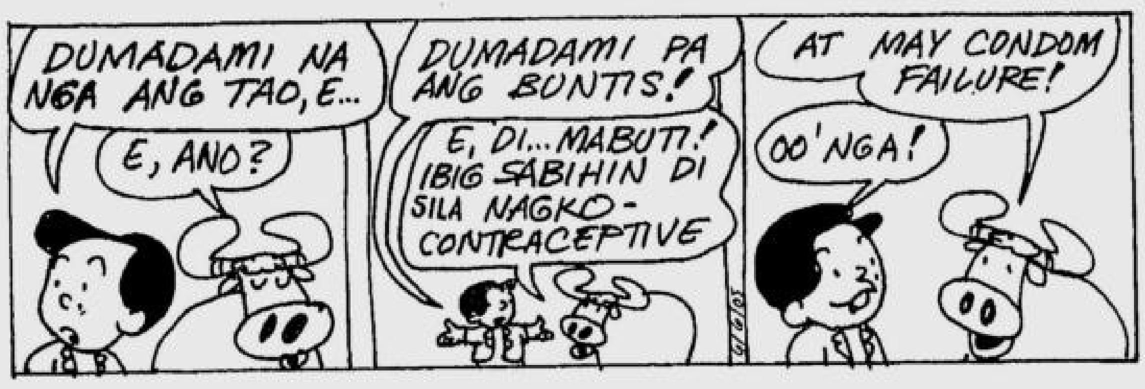
6/6/05

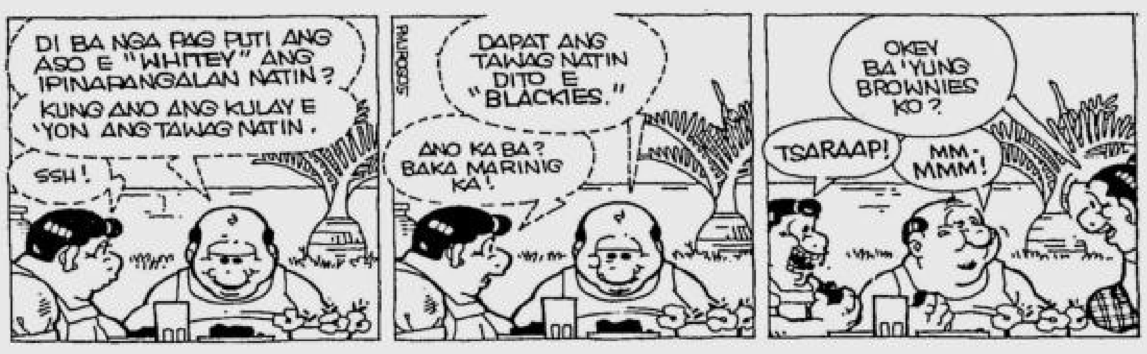
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


DUMADAMI NA NGA ANG TAO, E...
E, ANO?
DUMADAMI PA ANG BUNTIS!
E, DI... MABUTI! IBIG SABIHIN DI SILA NAGKO-CONTRACEPTIVE
AT MAY CONDOM FAILURE!
OO'NGA!

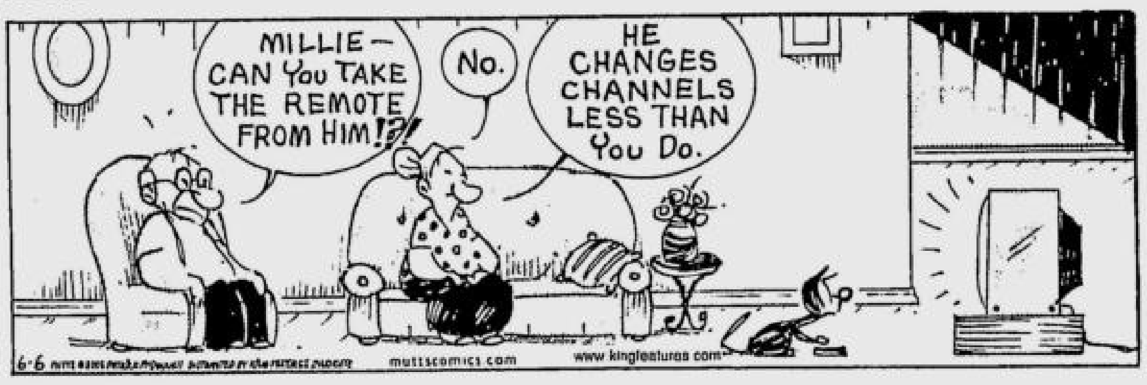
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


DI BA NGA PAG PUTI ANG ASO E "WHITEY" ANG IPINARANGALAN NATIN?
KUNG ANO ANG KULAY E 'YON ANG TAWAG NATIN.
SSH!
DAPAT ANG TAWAG NATIN DITO E "BLACKIES."
ANO KA BA? BAKA MARINIG KA!
OKEY BA 'YUNG BROWNIES KO?
TSARAAP!
MM-MMM!

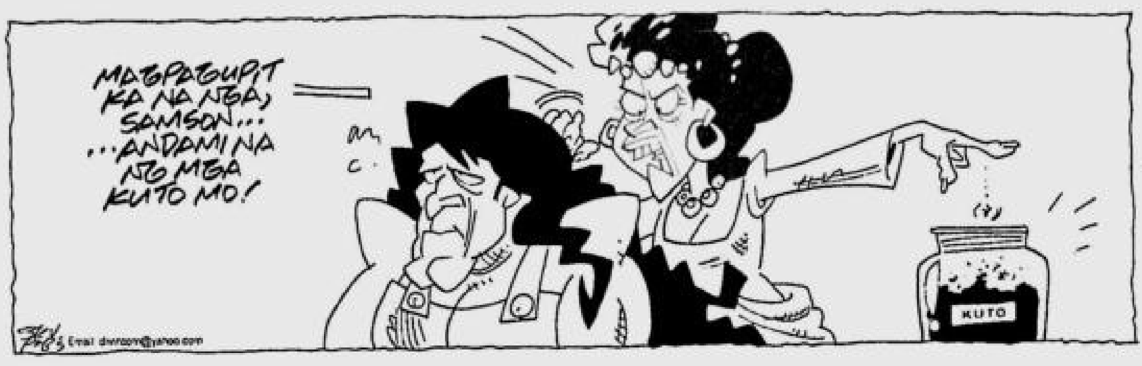
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MILLIE— CAN YOU TAKE THE REMOTE FROM HIM!?!
No.
HE CHANGES CHANNELS LESS THAN YOU DO.
6-6
muttscomics.com
www.kingfeatures.com

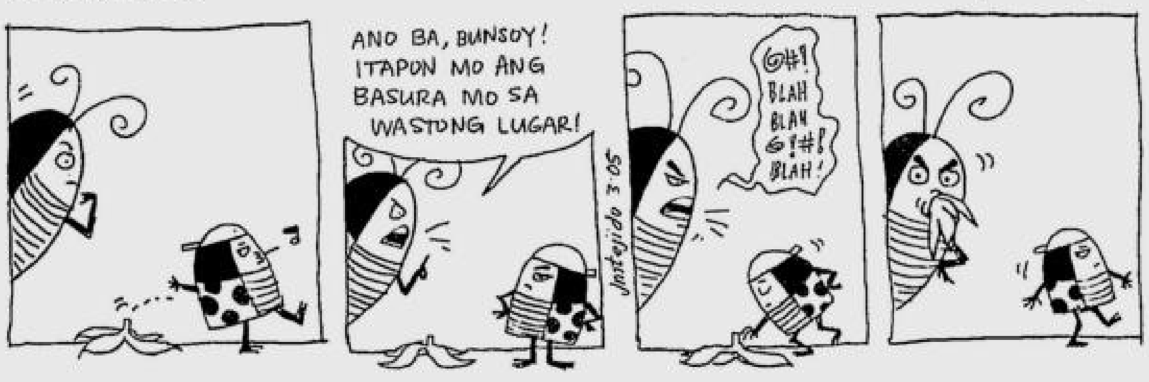
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


MAGPAGUPIT KA NA NGA, SAMSON... ...ANDAMI NA NG MGA KUTO MO!
KUTO

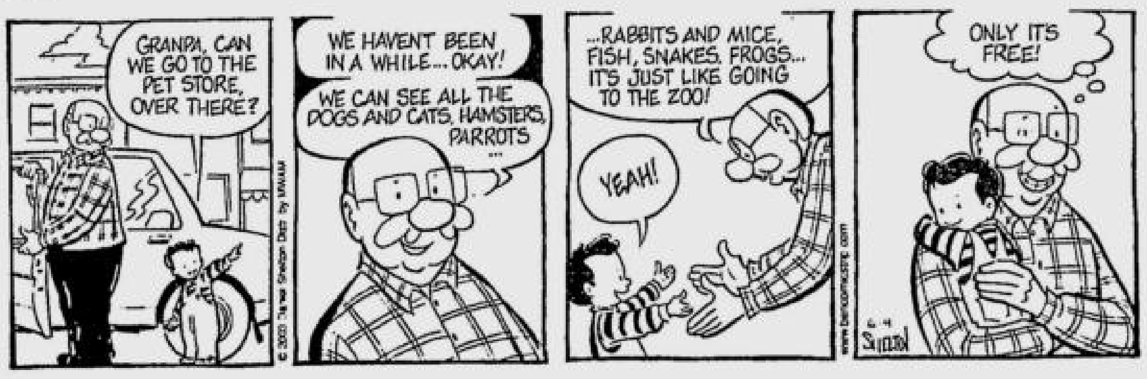
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANO BA, BUNSOY! ITAPON MO ANG BASURA MO SA WASTONG LUGAR!
G#! BLAH BLAH G!#! BLAH!
jtejido 3.05

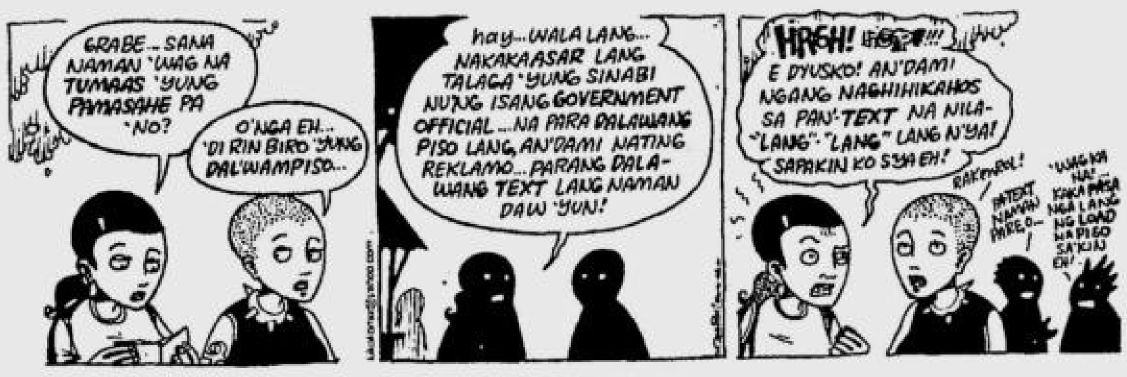
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


GRANPA, CAN WE GO TO THE PET STORE, OVER THERE?
WE HAVENT BEEN IN A WHILE... OKAY!
WE CAN SEE ALL THE DOGS AND CATS, HAMSTERS, PARROTS...
...RABBITS AND MICE, FISH, SNAKES, FROGS... IT'S JUST LIKE GOING TO THE ZOO!
YEAH!
ONLY IT'S FREE!

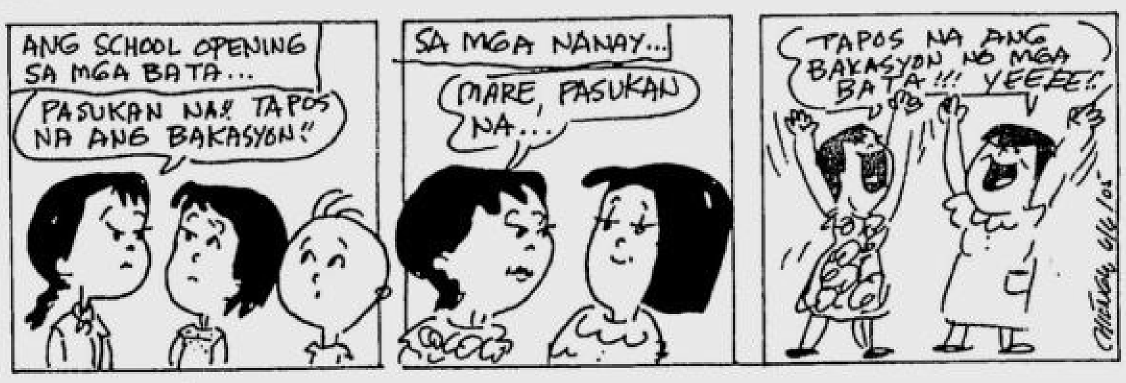
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


GRABE... SANA NAMAN 'WAG NA TUMAAS 'YUNG PAMASAHE PA 'NO?
O'NGA EH... 'DI RIN BIRO 'YUNG DAL'WAMPISO...
hay... WALA LANG... NAKAKAASAR LANG TALAGA 'YUNG SINABI NUNG ISANG GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL... NA PARA DALAWANG PISO LANG, AN'DAMI NATING REKLAMO... PARANG DALAWANG TEXT LANG NAMAN DAW 'YUN!
HRGH!
E DYUSKO! AN'DAMI NGANG NAGHIHIKAHOS SA PAN-TEXT NA NILA-"LANG"-"LANG" LANG N'YA! SAPAKIN KO S'YA EH!
RAKENROL!
PATEXT NAMAN PARE O...
'WAG KA NA... KAKAPASA NGA LANG NG LOAD NA PISO SA'KIN EH!

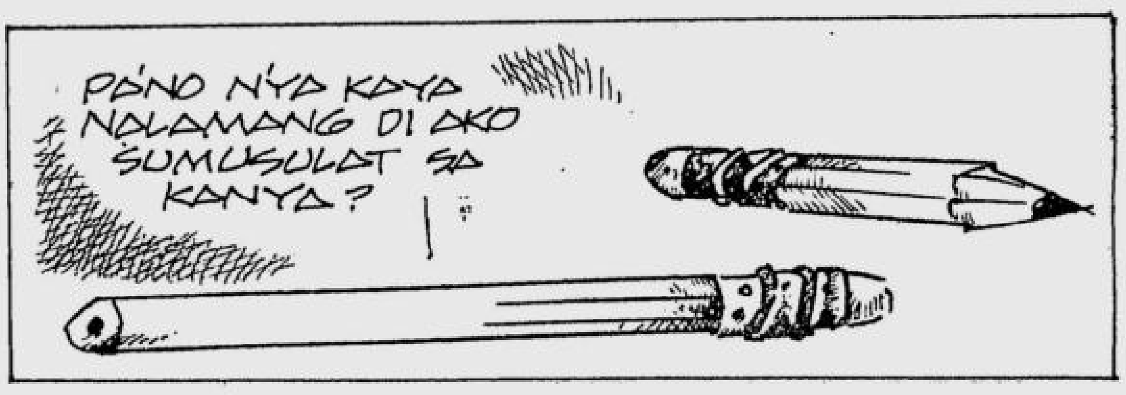
LOVEKNOTS

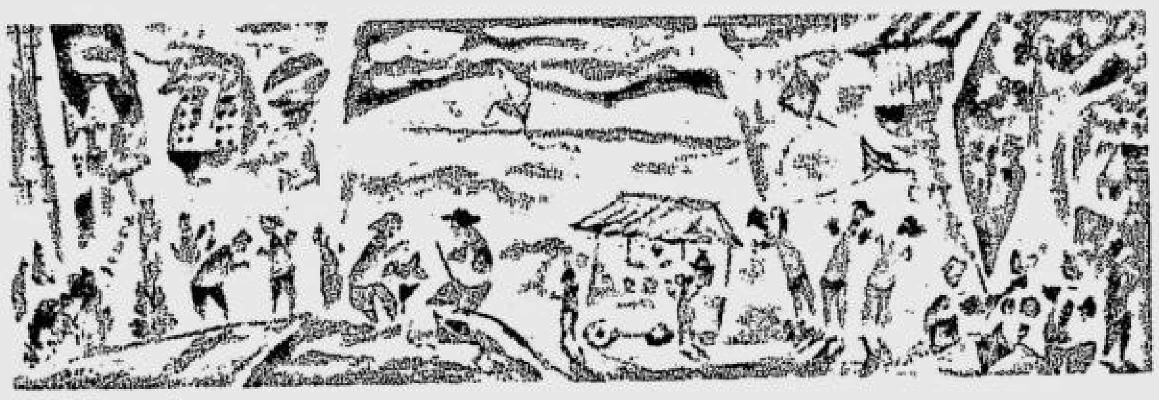
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

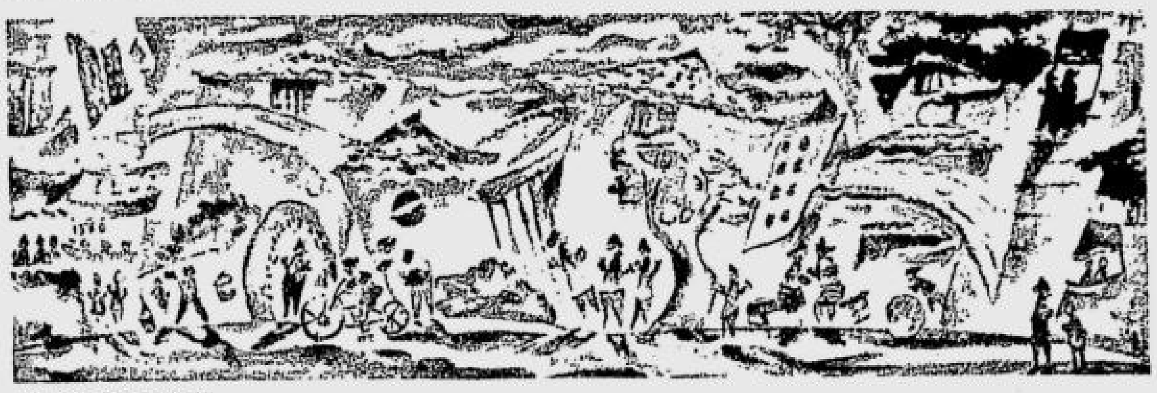

ANG SCHOOL OPENING SA MGA BATA...
PASUKAN NA! TAPOS NA ANG BAKASYON!
SA MGA NANAY...
MARE, PASUKAN NA...
TAPOS NA ANG BAKASYON NG MGA BATA!!! YEEEE!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

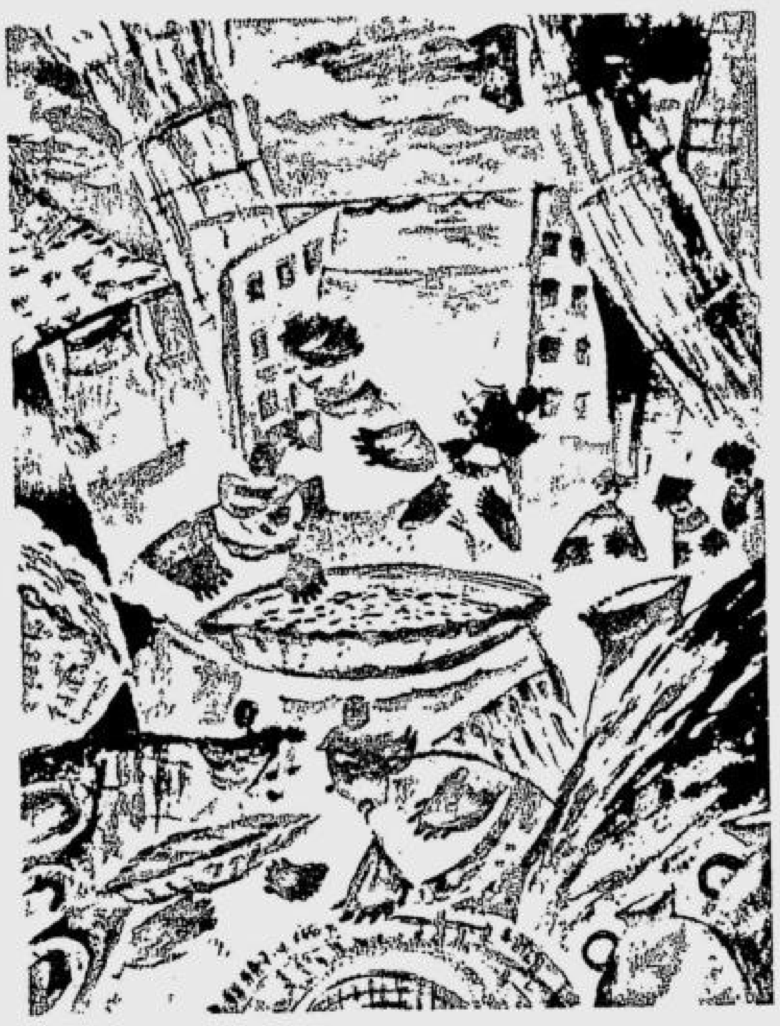

PANO NYA KAYA NALAMANG DI AKO SUMUSULAT SA KANYA?

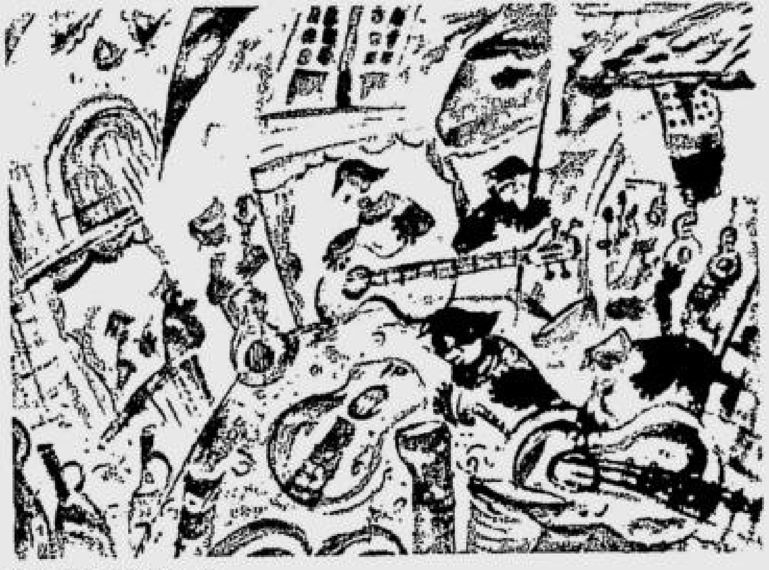

"KITE Papano"


"PLAYGROUND"

The guileless art of Anthony Fermin

From page D1


"BACKYARD Business"


"GUITAR Making"

artist uses are yellow and bright. "Most of my paintings have yellows signifying my dreams," he added.

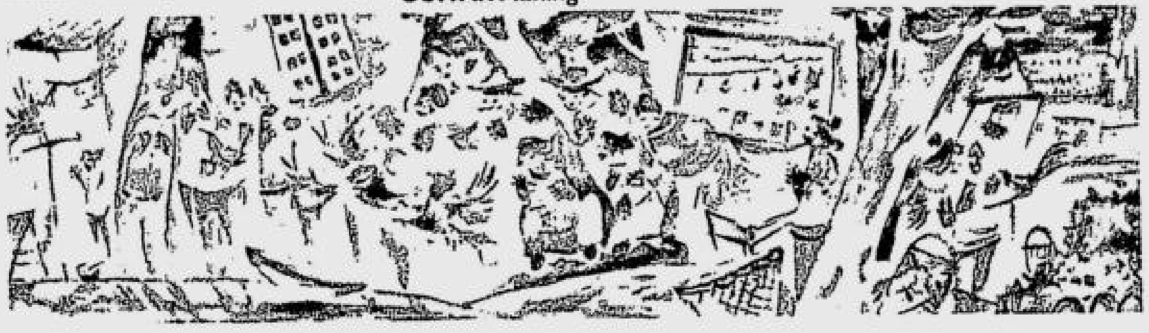
We don't know about the dreams, but the scenes he paints are quite concrete and not exactly ineffable or nebular. His scenes of cockfights may lack the grim and grime of the cockpit, but they render the excitement and the pandemonium in brushstrokes that are spontaneous and playful.

It couldn't be otherwise. Despite his seeming proclivity toward the *sabong*, Fermin seems temperamentally more attuned to play and celebration of the more innocent sort. His is a childlike sensibility that is not dampened by sobering news. He is unfalteringly bright. The sense of optimism could be quite infectious, as in "Kite Papano" and "Playground."

But Fermin is also capable of other less "infantile" scenes, such as his fond take on the guitar industry in Cebu in "Guitar Making" and his quirky portrayal of the informal sector in "Backyard Business." In these and other works, the familiar Fermin figures hovering over the canvas like Chagallian spirits are there, rendered in cartoonish lines but merry colors.

Only 29, Fermin is either too young for pathos or too old for optimism. One may complain that his works are too bright, too positive. It may be that such a rich confection is almost numbing, yes, but again and again, he shows it is the artist's task to celebrate.

Anthony Fermin's "Kasadya," an Artery production, runs from June 7-27 in One Luna Gallery, One Luna Lifestyle Center, Eastwood, Libis, Quezon City. Call. 8622246 0928-2188516.


"SA PUTI"

For Arte Pintura, art is worship

By Nenet Galang-Pereña
Contributor

MEMBERS of Arte Pintura

ARTE Pintura, a group of aspiring artists who paint nature as a paean to God's works, is on its eight year, undaunted by the socioeconomic upheavals tearing the country apart. For them, painting is a an act of worship—an affirmation of the Maker's magnificence.

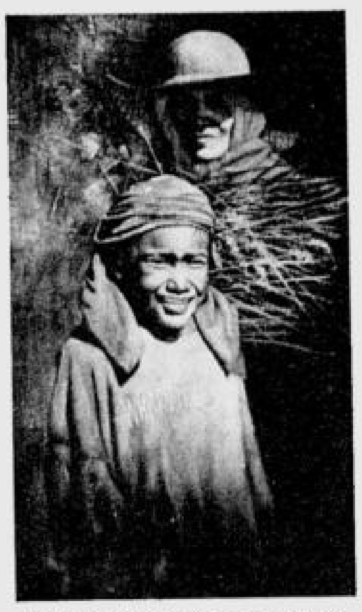
The group started in 1997, exhibiting around Metro Manila. Some of the original members have moved on, but the hardliners pursue the call of the Muses with regular exhibits.

"Variations," the group's exhibit, is being held at the Renaissance Gallery at SM Megamall until June 12.

Arte is headed by Addie Cukingnan. Members are Azor Pazcoguin, Redy Ademis, Jessie Martin, Tony Yusi, Abelardo Pasigado, Betty Luz Chua, Shirley Tan, Rey Aurelio and Debbie Ann Tan.

Cukingnan, a physical therapist by profession, is one of the stalwarts in the group, whose pursuit of her vocation as painter is unrelenting. She, along with Pazcoguin, had exhibited in New York in 2003.

"This exhibit showcases the varied styles and subjects of the artists, thus the title 'Variations,'" explains Cukingnan.


"MAG-INANG Magpapalay," by Rey Aurelio

"Variations" is for the benefit of the Messiah College Foundation, Inc., whose mission is to provide Christ-centered biblically grounded higher education.

With oil on canvas as their medium, the group chose to portray Nature in a positive light.

"Enchanting White Roses" by Cukingnan, for example, shows her at her vintage best, evoking the soft and pristine petals of this ethereal metaphor for love on a stark dark background. Cukingan is fixated on flowers, rendering them with poetic vision.

In "Orchids Galore," the vanishing shades of blue on the black background conjure the magical splendor of the Masters' chiaroscuro in a modern vein.

Pazcoguin's "Mangga" Series is a work rich in local color. "Sa Hardin ni Nena" by Yusi and "Red and White Petunias" by Ademis are impressionistic takes on the secret garden of our dreams.

Aurelio's "Foliage" has a surreal quality, the leaves rendered blue and purple on a vermillon background.

"Sunset" Series by Shirley Tan and "Missing You in Harbor Dreams" by Debbie Ann Tan are land and sea scapes, respectively. They make the heart pine for the quieting presence of nature amid a harried life.

Arte Pintura opened its own gallery at 2/F Kitaro Building at Shaw Blvd. cor. Wack Wack Road, Mandaluyong City. Saturday painting workshops open to all art enthusiasts are also held here.

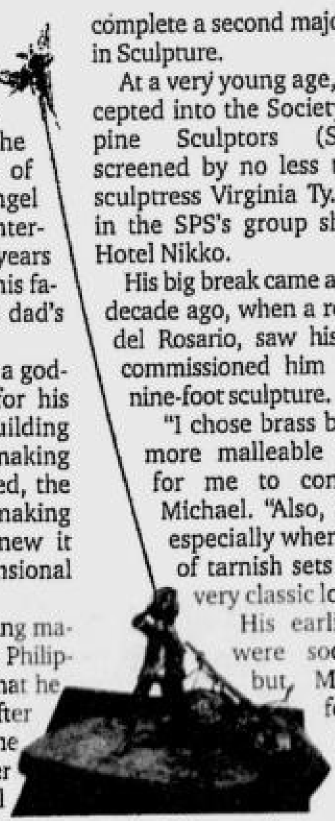
Some of their students have special needs. Despite their physical and mental limitations, they have created extraordinary works, to the delight of their mentors.

The artists also donate their works to the Unicef, Silong Tanglaw Foundation, Alay Kapwa, Millenium Foundation, PGH Children's Ward and churches.

Those interested in Arte Pintura's oil painting workshops may call 7266542 (look for Emy) or visit http://arte_pintura.tripod.com.

Timeless pieces on the Filipino spirit

By Joaquin Teotico
Contributor


"COCONUT Harvest"

MICHAEL Cacnio comes from a pedigreed family. The youngest of four children of noted Bulakeño artist Angel Cacnio, he started getting interested in art as early as four years old. He would hang out in his father's studio trying out his dad's watercolors and paints.

His career was set when a godmother gave him a gift for his fifth birthday: a Lego building blocks set. Instead of making houses as the set instructed, the young Michael ended up making figures. That early, he knew it would be the three-dimensional world for him.

Although he was a Painting major at the University of the Philippines, it was in sculpture that he found himself drawn to. After graduation, he added one more year of studies under the tutelage of National Artist Napoleon Abueva to complete a second major, this time in Sculpture.

At a very young age, he was accepted into the Society of Philippine Sculptors (SPS) and screened by no less than noted sculptress Virginia Ty. He joined in the SPS's group show in the Hotel Nikko.

His big break came a little over a decade ago, when a realtor, Edna del Rosario, saw his work and commissioned him to make a nine-foot sculpture.

"I chose brass because it is more malleable and easier for me to control," says Michael. "Also, I like brass especially when some form of tarnish sets in. It has a very classic look."

His earlier subjects were social realist, but, Michael has found his niche in his "Children" series. He recalls having a very happy childhood in their house in Malabon, where he found himself playing all sorts of games—*trumpo, goma, gagamba, patintero, jolens* and, of course, his now famous subject, kite-flying.

It is these joyous moments in the Filipino spirit that Michael has captured in his timeless pieces. Most of the subjects in his current works are children.

"FISH Harvest"

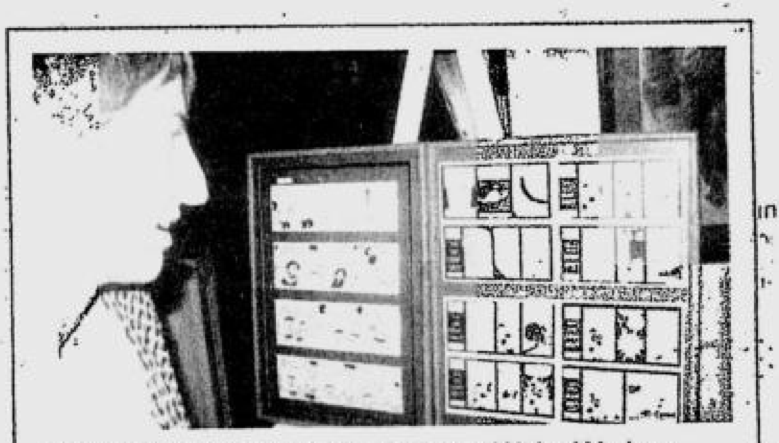
For the show, "Bountiful Harvest," at The Podium, Michael's works include the major piece "Salambao" (inspired by his childhood visits to the fishing area of Navotas), which shows a fisherman with a large net on a bamboo raft with several baskets of fish.

"Fish Harvest" shows two boys on a *bangka* with a large net of caught fish. "Coconut Harvest" employs the Michael Cacnio technique of "suspended state." It shows a boy with a pole catching buko.

"Mango Harvest" shows a boy atop a mango tree picking fruits.

Michael Cacnio does not use a cast or a mold. Each work comes out as a unique piece, a different statement in itself.

"Bountiful Harvest" opens June 7 and runs until June 12 at the Activity Center of The Podium.


UNITED Nations resident coordinator and United Nations Development Program regional coordinator Deborah Landey views comic strips with anti-corruption themes in the recent National Commission for Culture and the Arts Cultural Summit, "The Power of Arts and Media for Values Formation: Breaking the Cycle of Corruption, Poverty Pollution and Violence" in line with President Macapagal-Arroyo's program for "social transformation through culture and the arts."

Ramirez at West, Dayrit at Mag;Net

VISUAL ARTS

CCP Thirteen Artists Awardee Claro Ramirez presents his eighth solo exhibit "No Rhyme Nor Reason" in West Gallery, Megamall, from June 9-21. In this show of three-dimensional works processed art objects, personal effects, and found materials, Ramirez invokes oblique references to everyday reality in arguing for the liberative value of nuanced, internal logic grounded in specific contexts. Call 6341284.

MAG:NET Gallery Paseo presents Joy Dayrit's "Erasure" until June 30 at the G/F, Paseo Center, Paseo de Roxas cor. Sedeño St., Makati. The artist paints images on canvas with the intention of erasing them. The show challenges the traditional concept of painting as a purely additive process. For the artist, the ritual of erasing one's images starts in the detachment from self. The show is curated by Roberto Chabet. Call 8177895.

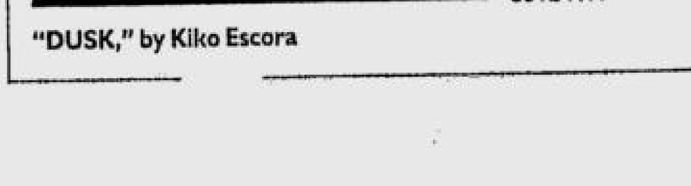
"BALASANG," by Riel Hilario

KIKO Escora's one-man show "Heat Stroke" is currently on view until June 15 at the Drawing Room, G/F, Metrostar Building, 1007 Metropolitan Ave., Makati City. With the scorching summer heat as his theme, Escora creates interesting landscapes inspired by summers spent on Boracay and in Metro Manila. Call 8976990/7877.

RIEL Hilario presents seven wood sculptures for his solo exhibit "Kadkadduwa" in Boston Gallery until June 22. Call 7229205.

BULACAN visual artists will present an exhibit "Kay Ganda ng Bayan Kong Pilipinas," on June 12, at the Paradise Hotel and Resort in Malolos, Bulacan. Artist Hanz Karamihan will lead BPA exhibitors.

THE EUGENIO Lopez Foundation will present a lecture on ceramics featuring Cynthia Ongpin-Valdes as guest speaker, on June 11, 2-4 p.m., at the Lopez Memorial Museum, G/F, Benpres Building, Exchange Road corner Meralco Avenue, Pasig City. Call 6312417.


"DUSK," by Kiko Escora

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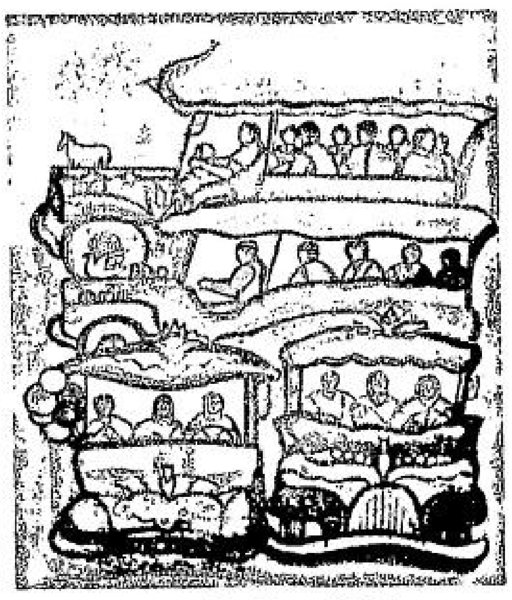
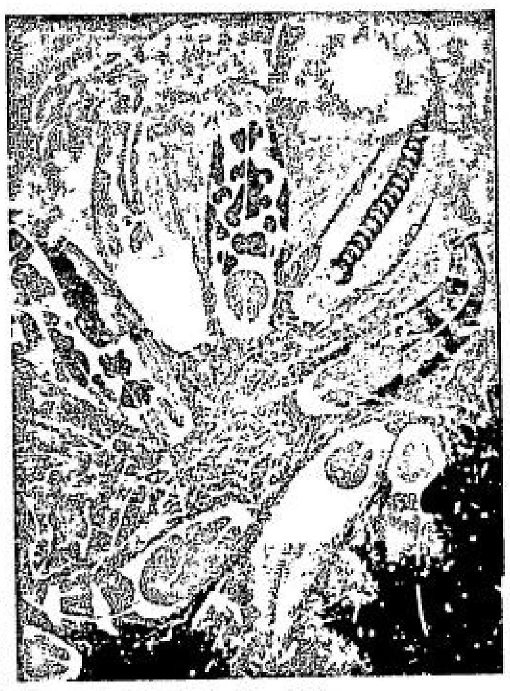

"JEEPNEY Series," by Manuel Baldemor

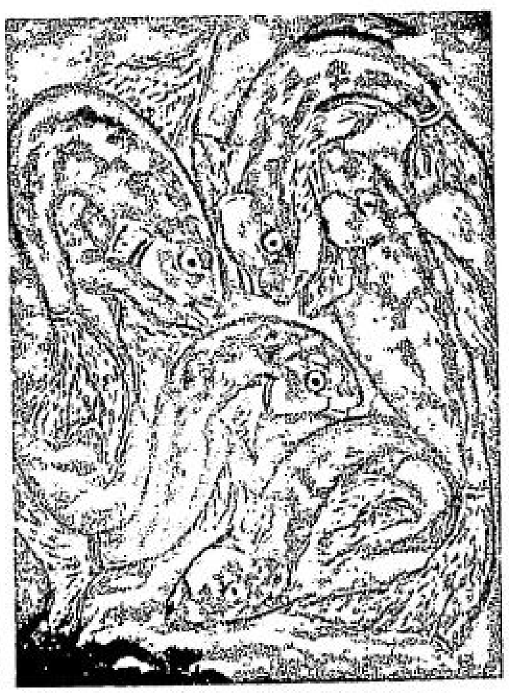
Cuatro Amigos goes to China

IN CELEBRATION of Philippine Independence Day and to mark the 30th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between the Philippines and the People's Republic of China, the Filipino Association in Xiamen, China will mount an exhibit of works by Malang, Manuel Baldemor, Julius Limpe and Al Perez on June 12-19 at the SM Mall in Xiamen. The show is dubbed "Cuatro Amigos."

The show in coordination with the Philippine Consulate General in Xiamen, Foreign Office of the Xiamen Goverment and the Cultural Bureau of Xiamen Government and Cultural Bureau of Xiamen.

The four renowned artists will exhibit modernist works on various subjects in warm, beautiful colors and individual styles.


"EIGHT Lucky Kois," by Al Perez


"SPOTTY Fish in Hawaii," Julius Limpe

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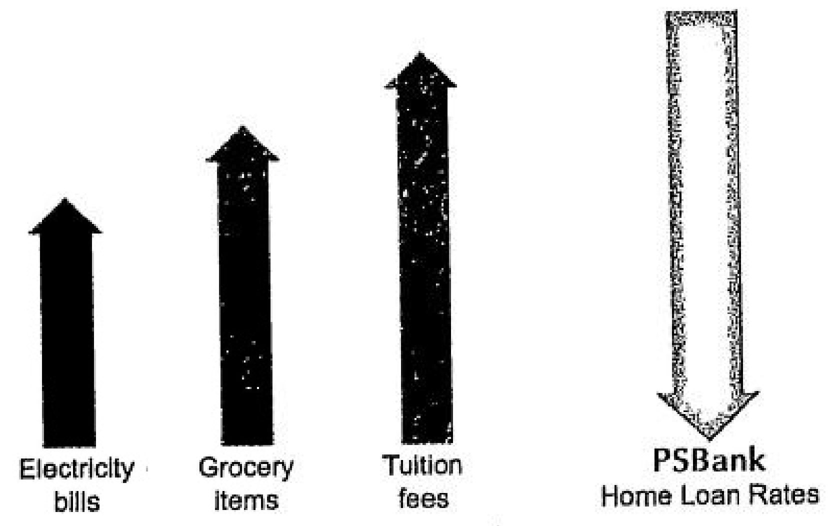

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NILO Ilarde's conceptual case /E2

Government ignores national treasures

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

MANY things about the state of art and culture in this country are worth reflecting on as the nation observes its Independence Day on Sunday, June 12.

The good news is Filipino artists continue to shine here and abroad.

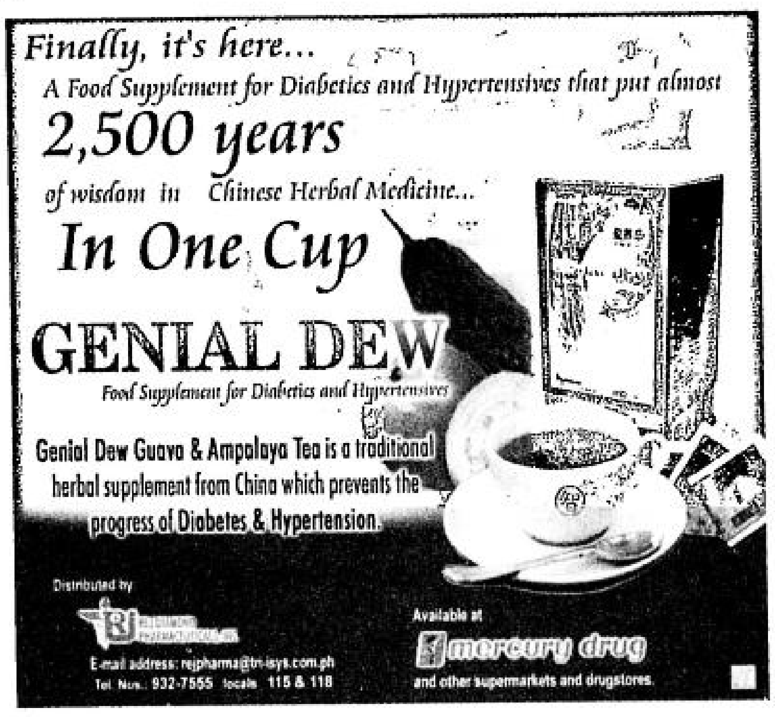
Cesar Montano's "Panaghoy Sa Suba" (Call of the River) got fantastic reception in Cannes (several scenes were applauded, among them the letter-writing scene of Montano and Rebecca Lusterio, the audience yelling "Bravo!" lustily at the end of Lusterio's narration of life by the river).

The Cannes audience also got some insight into the Mindanao conflict with Marilou Diaz-Abaya's "Bagong Buwan."

Our own Cecile Licad continues to dazzle audiences in the United States almost every

GOVERNMENT/ E4

CELLIST Victor Michael Coo at the Antipolo Music-Art house with pianist Cecile Roxas



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High blood pressure, otherwise known as "Hypertension" is a smooth assassin. According to the American Heart Association,

High blood pressure means that your heart works harder at any given moment to supply your body with the necessary amount of blood. This often results to heart attacks and strokes. Making everything worse is the fact that you may be blissfully ignorant that there is problem at all until it is too late, because there are no noticeable outward signs that you have high blood pressure.

The situation becomes far more complicated for Diabetics. Diabetes is a disease in which the body fails to produce or properly utilize Insulin. The hormone is vital in converting sugar, starches, and other food into energy needed for normal daily living.

Most people with Diabetes are exposed to risk factors such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol. And since more than 65% of those afflicted with Diabetes succumb to heart disease or stroke, managing blood pressure and cholesterol level, is a matter which Diabetics must take seriously.

By controlling your diet, increasing your physical activity through exercise, and consulting your physician regularly, the risk for heart attack and stroke can be greatly reduced, whether you are Diabetic or not.

Studies reveal that the much-ignored Guava can also be very helpful in your battle against cardiovascular problems. Its fruit contains Amino Acids which help prevent Atherosclerosis or blockage of blood vessels while its leaves boast of Potassium which helps maintain normal blood pressure and proper function of the heart. In addition, the Guava has been proven to contain twice the amount of Vitamin C found in citrus fruits.

Now available in the market is Genial Dew, the daily supplement beverage with Guava derivatives as its primary ingredient. Genial Dew aims to reduce Hypertension cases. Other components of the beverage include the ***Ampalaya fruit*** which is clinically proven to lower cholesterol and blood sugar levels, thus prevents the aggravation of Diabetes ***Ku Ting Tea*** which contains a lot of Cathecin and multivitamins aid in producing anti-oxidant properties to fight cancer. Another ingredient, ***To Tea***, keeps cholesterol levels down and relaxes the body. ***Millet Beard*** with vitamin C function as stimulant and diuretic to treat liver weakness and Hypertension.

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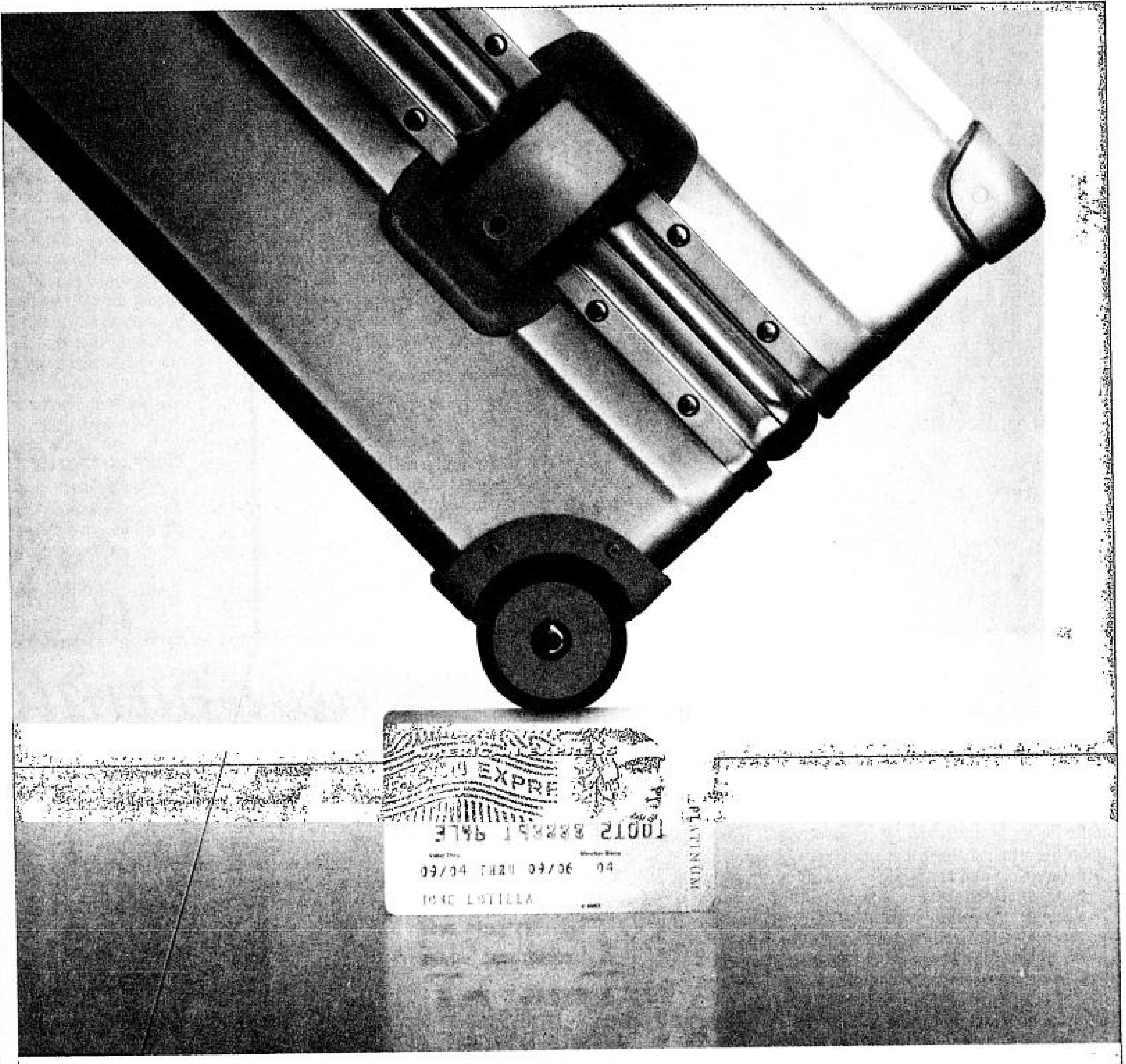

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Strong art emerges beyond hype

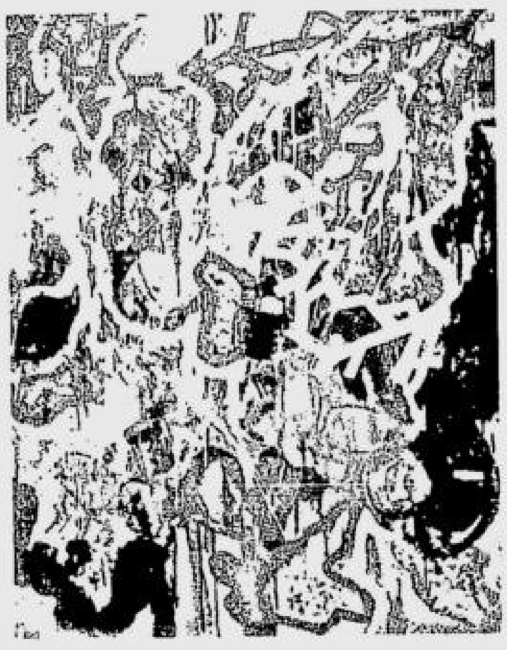
Patrick de Veyra and Roldan Ventura work on opposite poles of abstraction

By Constantino C. Tejero

THE GALLERY-GOER is by now sick and tired of staring at blank canvases insistently proffered as artworks by their manufacturers. So when a busy canvas appears, it comes like a thunderbolt.

Such are the acrylic collages in Patrick de Veyra's fourth solo exhibit "Assault & Retrieve" in West Gallery, 2/F, Mary Santos Artcade, 48 West Ave., Quezon City.

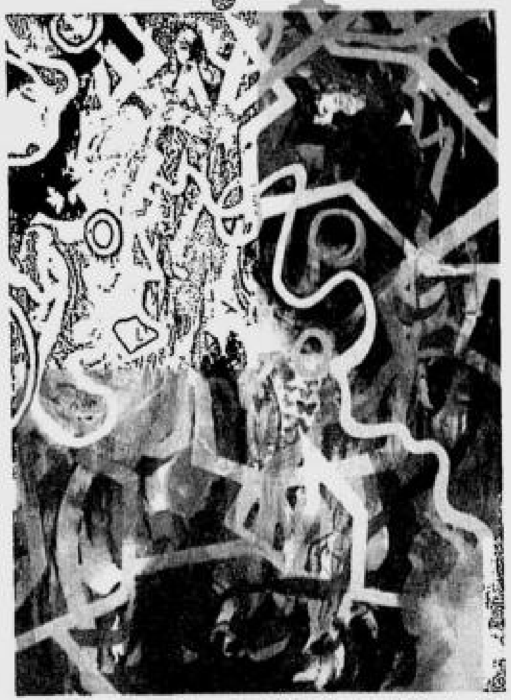
A very young artist, who just graduated from the University of the Philippines College of Fine Arts, De Veyra not only produces very busy imagery but has also a very busy mind. His exhibit's title, in fact, alludes to his frenetic art-making and recondite theme.



"ASSAULT and Retrieve" 5, by De Veyra

The exhibit's information sheet reveals the intriguing technique and subject: "De Veyra's collages play around contrasts, structure and imagery, showing us a glimpse of how all these move around in his head. It's his way of using images both as an instrument of memory and as a process through which he lets them move on to a new phase.

"The images are lithographs from an earlier set of works, pieced together and randomly splashed with paint onto a blank canvas. In the process, they are altered and transformed into new versions of themselves.



"ASSAULT and Retrieve" 2, by Patrick de Veyra

"De Veyra works with the same images layer upon layer, and paints on them both deliberately and spontaneously. He realizes some images, like memory, come and go, while others stay a little longer, sticking out no matter how he tries to obliterate or cover them.

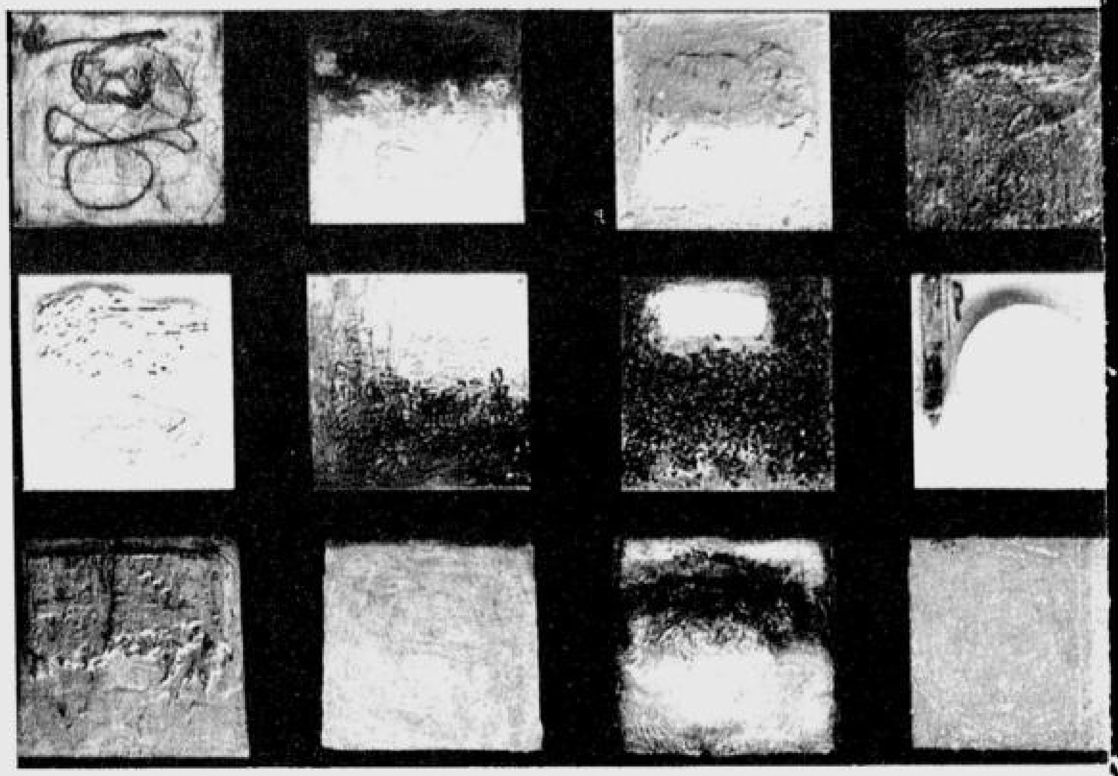
"In this exhibit, memory takes on a visual form. The artist describes the series as a guide map to how his mind, eyes and hands work together. These images somehow represent his past works and concerns, and how he has used them now to bring new insight and new meaning to his current line of thinking."

Subliminal images

The new set of works, emerging from collaging bits and pieces of old lithographs and painting them over, the artist calls "mindscapes." That may sound grand, but it's really just another pentimento technique.

"It's how our mind works," De Veyra explains.

He is referring to this continuous process of creating, obliterating, modifying, transforming. Which applies to both life experiences and art.



"MINDSET" Series, by Roldan Ventura

Which is what these artworks are about.

What we have here are formless color masses with subliminal images. Small multiple reproductions of women's faces and butterflies are half-buried in turquoise, burnt umber, raw sienna, lavender, orange, slate-green, cobalt, red, yellow, black. Or a monstrous face emerges occupying the whole canvas, outlined in hot pink.

It is a sophisticated abstraction, one approaching Hans Hofmann's strong color sense and vibrant brushstrokes, and appropriating Frank Stella's explosive patterns of squiggles, zigzags, circles and curves.

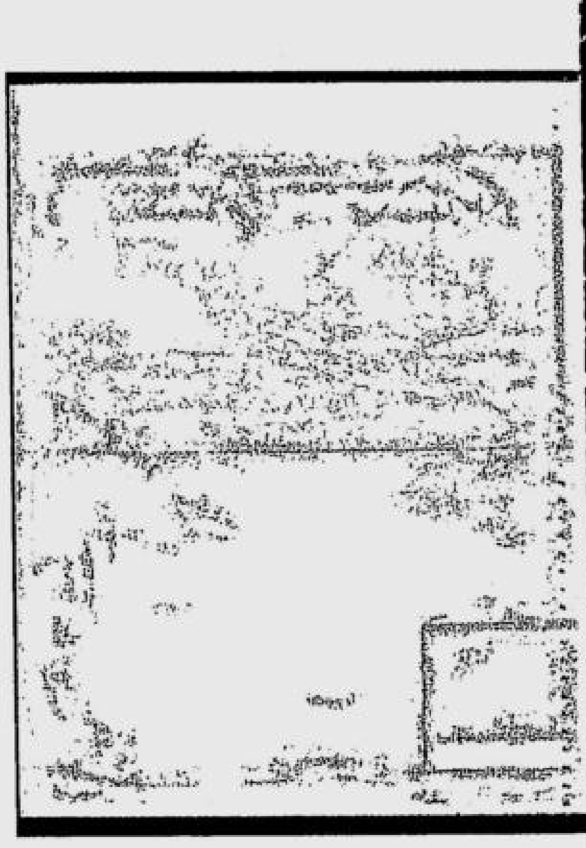
Continues the info sheet: "De Veyra is continuously discovering diversity, contrast and transparency as he explores different techniques and elements through his own works as well as through other stimulating media like film, literature and art history."

That's a tall order. We hope it's not just hype. So, okay, we'll watch out for this young artist.

Color and texture

A young artist who makes the blankness of the canvas look busy is Roldan Ventura. He accomplishes this by deploying color masses and weird textural elements.

For a time, this young man had been trapped in the representational art of his older brothers



"THE BLOOD," by Ventura

A non-painter's palette

By Carina L. Evangelista
Contributor

NILO Ilarde's "Art!" exhibition at Mag:Net Paseo recently presented eloquently engineered formalist elements as skin and structure, void and undergrid.

By lining the entire length and height of two sides of the gallery with tables stacked on their sides, the walls literally moved forward, tightening the space and crowding the viewer who is forced to confront its surface. The surface is comprised of the table tops that now function as walls.

Covered with linoleum spattered with paint and textured with the occasional cut or tear, the entire expanse of both walls became a towering mass of mostly abstract stains and marks. Blues, reds, yellows, greens and blacks register in random swoosh, blotch or flourish.

Ilarde called this panoramic painted surface one of the most beautiful paintings he had laid eyes on. Himself known for conceptual works that involve neither paintbrush nor canvas, this exclamation can be perceived as the artist succumbing to the lure of aesthetics.

Formalist elements? Aesthetics? Has the conceptual artist suffered identity crisis?

No, the point here is that Conceptual Art may seem dry, calculated, formulaic, opaque. But experiencing an installation like Ilarde's, whether one knows the how and why or not, can be moving. The very physicality of these tables-now-walls is overwhelming.

They are tables reoriented from their very meaning and function and you are dwarfed by their solid presence. The table legs are like scaffold that tethers the tables' weight and volume to the walls.

Conceptual Art

These tables were borrowed from the art room of a Chinese high school in Binondo. What Ilarde found beautiful is still within the rubric of Conceptual Art. These are ready-mades or found objects; and the stained linoleum covering, the found image.

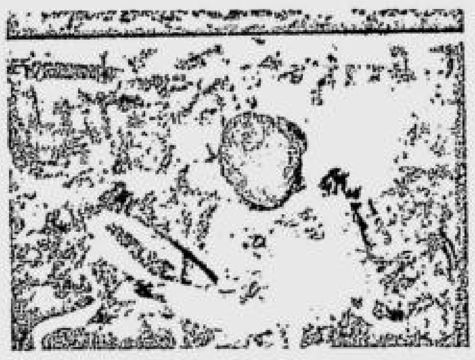
Ilarde reoriented not just the tables but also Jackson Pollock's Action Painting. Pollock's "drips" were random but still determined. The marks Ilarde found beautiful are random and unintended. In fact, they are the marks that did not make it on the paper, canvas, or sculpture of the scores of students who had worked on their art projects on these art tables. These spills are the mistakes, the "negative marks," virtually a Salon des Refusés.

In the front window of the gallery, two round boards wrapped in printed tarp material hung vertically. The large one was clamped on the wall on one side. The small one, similar to the lazy susan one finds in Chinese restaurants, was pegged on top of the larger circle and the gallery wall with two heavy water glasses, also typically found in Chinese restaurants. The glasses looked like binoculars and literally functioned as screws that held the two boards in place.

The tarp material is printed with a photograph of collaged details from the linoleum tops from the tables. The photograph printed is the negative of the "negative marks." As marks go, these white and gray spatters on black are simultaneously dizzying and elegant.

Finally, the gallery mezzanine featured a hole in the wall, exposing the drab concrete, the wooden joists, and three orange tubes that protect electrical wirings. The vaulted white cube of art galleries now stripped bare, the illusion of a privileged space was temporarily suspended.

The hole was the same size as each of the tables borrowed from the school. The plyboard from the cut wall was sent to the school in exchange for all the tables currently on loan to the artist. (Because school is out for summer, the art class is drastically smaller than during the school year and one tabletop sufficed for the time being.)



CONCEPTUAL Art may seem calculated, but Ilarde's installation can be moving.

This wall-now-table itself incurred markings, spills and stains-of course to Ilarde's delighted anticipation. Upon switching back tables and wall, the summer art table resumed its post and function as wall in the mezzanine of Mag:net for a week: another painting for viewers to ponder.

Elitism

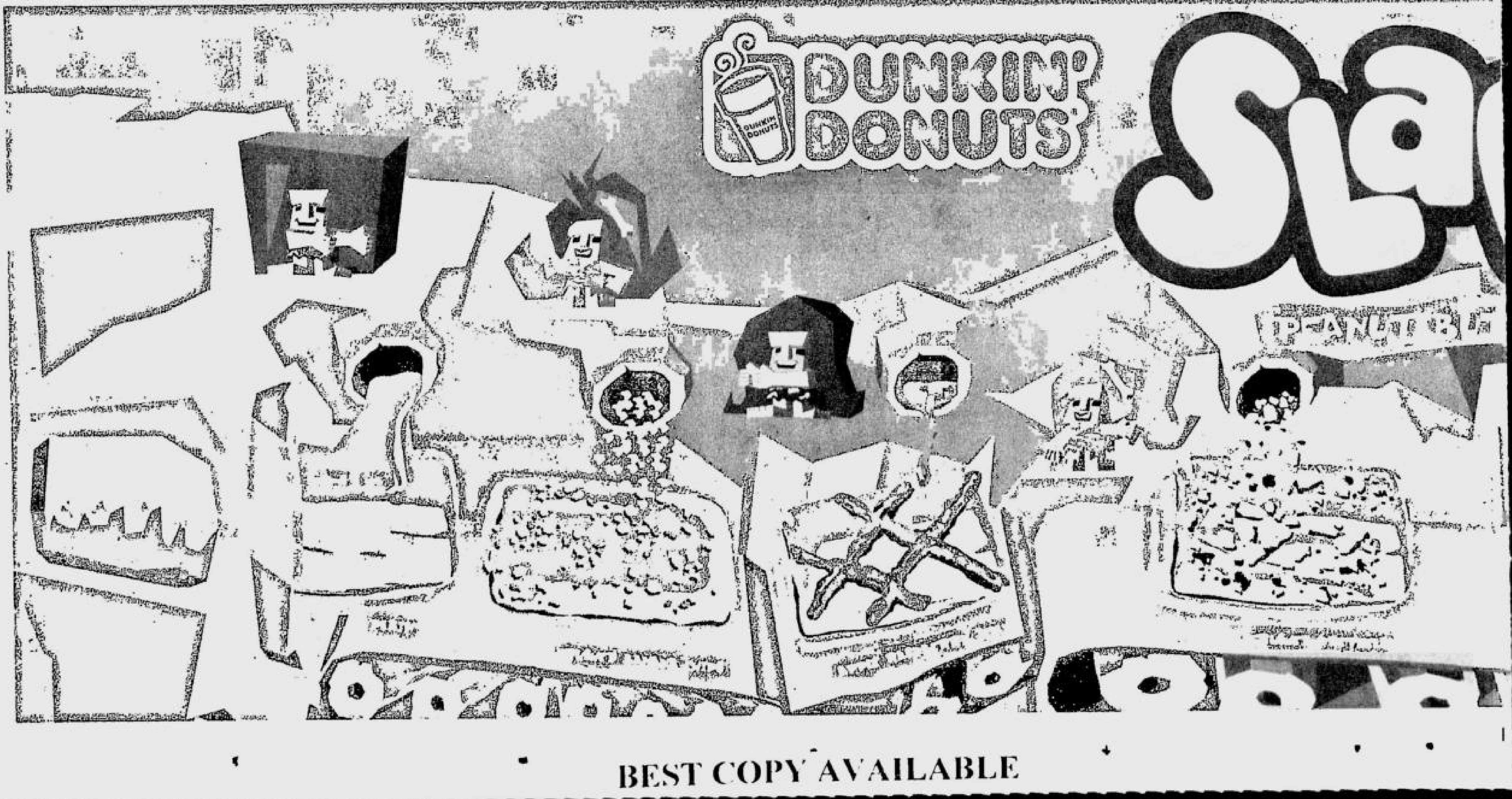
The usual slur against Conceptual
targeted at its perceived West-or
elitism. Because deemed illegible, it is
ed as elitist or alienating. But look
These are art tables from a school in
do. The tarp material was produced in
ly the same fashion as commercial bill
are made. How more plebeian and ho
rooted in Philippine context can these

Oh, but conceptual art is just f
anointed few because of its esoteric
the idea becomes more important th
form, which becomes a cipher. But it
minute to read the press release to fi
what it's all about.

If the artist is around, he or she is
willing to talk about the work if you as
an open mind. Artists, conceptual or n
to talk about their works; their artwo
their children!

Even without knowing the referenc
installation challenges one's modes
ception. You crane your neck to look u
playful dabs of colors swim on the
that are mural in scale. There is an in
of the delicate and the monumental.

You peer into the hole in the wal
even if you might just call that hole t



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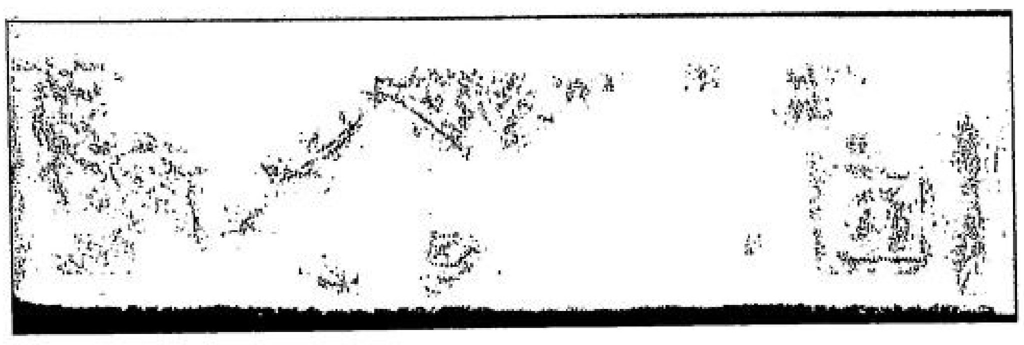

"REBIRTH," by Ventura

Ronald and Roland, resulting in heavily influenced art that's naturally imitative. Add to that the fact that the siblings' names sound similar, thus further confusing gallery-goers.

To be distinguishable from his siblings, Ventura veered toward abstraction, in the process cutting his art off his brothers' figuration, and emerged as a full-fledged abstractionist three years ago. He also started signing his artworks by his nickname "Manok."

"Nakulong ako sa mga kapatid ko, at di makalabas-labas," he confides. "But my heart has really been with abstraction ever since. My early works were abstract."

How far he has veered away from his brothers' art is amply demonstrated in his second solo exhibit "Rebirth," 19 pieces in mixed media on canvas and wood panel, in The Big & Small Art Co. at the Artwalk, Bldg. A, 4/L, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City.

"MEILA," by De Veyra

Remarkable for their masses of color and texture, the rectangular canvases vibrate with intense hues, especially in such works as "The Blood" (red, orange, yellow) and "Rebirth" (yellow and white). They, too, give off that inner glow viewers perceive in Mark Rothko's yellow abstraction "Untitled."

Also, like Rothko's huge canvases, Ventura's large-scale pieces such as "Life and Death," "Almost Perfect" and "The Blood" resemble two-panel paintings or diptychs. Actually, each is of a piece, with just a dividing line drawn across the middle of the canvas.

Unique material

The artist demonstrates a unique and original use of material. His rough paint application gives texture, emphasized by adds-on of versatex, gesso, and some weird stuff.

Typical is the "Mindset" series, 12 square wooden panels glued with bits of decaying wood, termite-eaten slabs, cotton gauze, nylon mesh, then painted gray, white, red, ochre, brown, slate-blue and covered with resin or linseed oil.

As is the artist's role, Ventura has retrieved some beauty from destruction. In one piece, termites he collected he has fixed with modeling paste on a panel, then covered with drippings of fiberglass. The petrified insects, now blackened, looks weirdly beautiful.

In another piece, what looks like a bit of white honeycomb is really a slab of wood gnawed by termites and rendered lacy, which the artist glued on a panel then painted with acrylic.

To Ventura, as far as material is concerned, anything goes in art. Here he has achieved a kind of transcendence, in the way he extracts spiritual themes from scavenged material.

Ventura studied Painting in University of the East. Among his favorite artists are Rothko, Lao Lianben and Joel Mendez, who he says are most influential on his work. (He fails to mention Rauschenberg, the man who validated combine paintings, which his artworks really are.)

This exhibit is a process of becoming, a sort of artistic evolution, a rebirth, as it were. Ventura has emerged from his brothers' shadows, so we look forward to seeing him come out unscathed as well from the clutches of men like Rothko and Rauschenberg.

Of emerging abstractionists, he is one of the more interesting.

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peror's new clothes, it got you thinking—albeit in a sniggering manner. In short, it engaged the mind beyond the facile seductions of standard aesthetic codes.

Spare, masculine

The premise behind Ilarde's strategy is clever but simple and straightforward; and it did require his artistic sensibility to find lyricism in dirty linoleum. The whole installation is spare and masculine with a touch of playful menace. The artist literally held hostage art tables from a school and abducted part of the gallery wall. The wall of tables is vault-like and the lacerated linoleum suggests flayed skin.

But there is also whimsy. There are only two deliberately written markings on the table tops: one that reads "I love Patrick Uy" and another written as if with a Chinese brush that exclaims "Art!"

Like a brain twister, there is always the pleasure of surprise, the element of fun, the rigor of thought. And like a locket, there can even be sweetness or sentiment.

Anyone who chooses to dismiss Conceptual Art is refusing the challenge of a puzzle, perchance the code of a political message, and maybe a short story or a song.

NILO Ilarde

MALL, XIAMEN, CHINA

From a wounded past to a radiant future

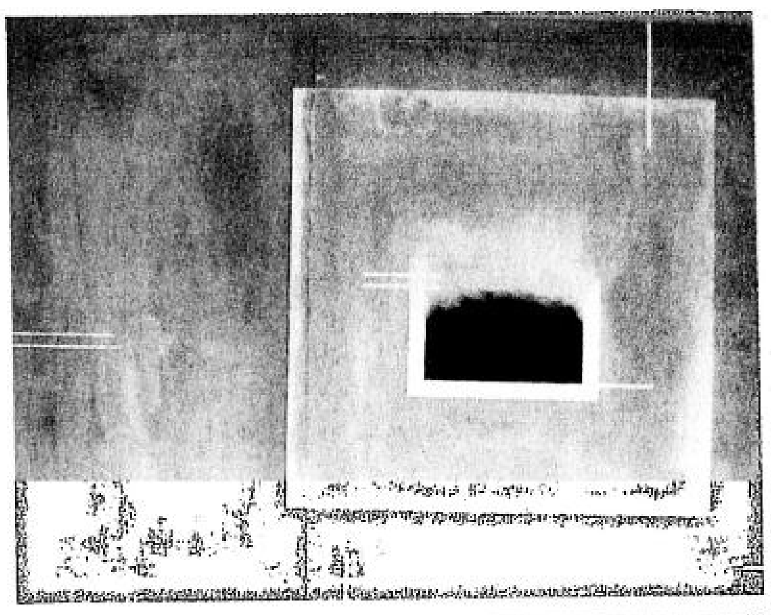
By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

THE ABSTRACTIONIST in Ruel Caasi is a case study of a deeply tormented creature, an aspiring social realist who empathizes with those suffering from the harsh conditions afflicting most of our citizens.

In his previous shows, he began exploring the image of "cuts" as injuries, dramatizing both the physical and emotional forms of tragedy. The artist probed the ill effects of human aggression on body and mind, both on paper and canvas, and in diverse forms of industrial media, .

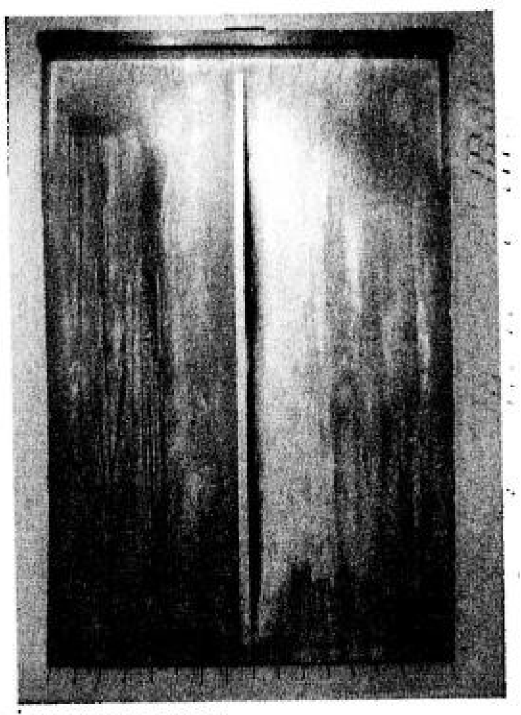
In his current show, "Wound Works," at The Big & Small Art Co., in SM Megamall (until June 9), Caasi continues to probe deeper than the surface appeal of "cuts" or openings that connote the fragility of human existence.

Without being melodramatic, which could have been an easy way out of his predicament, Caasi ventures into the spiritual and truly philosophical domain, transforming the figure of torment into a visual diary of inquiry and process of both concealment and exposure.



"ANIMUS"

Caasi transforms the figure of torment into a visual diary of inquiry and process of both concealment and exposure



"ILLUMINATION"

Delicate and subdued

Each piece in the "wound" series—eight works in varying sizes—is executed with remarkably delicate and subdued impasto, gently sweeping movements across the canvases, unfolding marks beneath fluid linear lines, suggesting scars and other marks of tragic circumstances.

Equally pervasive is the empty space, almost bare save for the accident of dripping or flowing paint. The shape of things is spare and bare, the dominant color totally reductive and intuitive, like what we undergo when we get into a deep meditative state.

The kind of abstraction Caasi practices is, indeed, far from being expressionist like Gus Albor's or Roy Veneracion's. It is, in fact, closer in spirit to the works of Lao Lian Ben, a zealous advocate of Zen Buddhism.

Living in the laid-back but now dissipated surroundings of Montalban (now Rodriguez) resulting from unmitigated quarrying and migration, Caasi has grown more sensitive to nature's response to human encroachment on its territory.

With the portentous signs from a series of catastrophes that buffeted Southeast Asia, not to mention the raging war in the Middle East, our planet is the picture of a wounded world. Caasi's show helps reassert art's role in transforming the planet into a more hospitable and truly habitable place.

Four friends

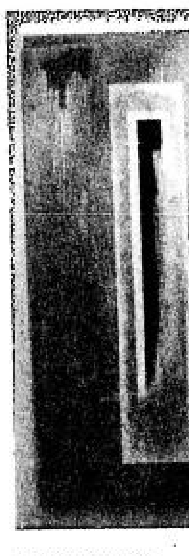
Meanwhile, four artists who have been together through thick and thin, mostly thick, I suppose, have one special reason to celebrate this month.

Manny Baldemor, Malang, Julius Limpe and Al Perez, who call themselves "Cuatro Amigos," are exhibiting their recent works at the SM Mall in far-flung Xiamen, China.

The show, also called "Cuatro Amigos," will open June 12, Philippine Independence Day. It will involve the Philippine Consulate General, the Filipino Association in Xiamen, and Xiamen's Cultural Bureau.

The four Filipino artists will proudly carry the country's colors in their works, a tapestry of modern art showcasing our rich cultural heritage.

Baldemor is, of course, a worthy ambassador of art, with folk art as central icon. He has exhibited in numerous museums and galleries the world over. After Xiamen, Baldemor is slated to hold shows in Helsinki, Finland; Edinburgh, Scotland; and Uppsala, Sweden.



"DIVINITY"

Malang, a leading figure in Philippine modern art, has continually explored the richness and diversity of our culture. An indefatigable leader in the local art scene, he has spearheaded the Saturday Group all these years, and promoted the art scene with his own gallery, West Gallery.

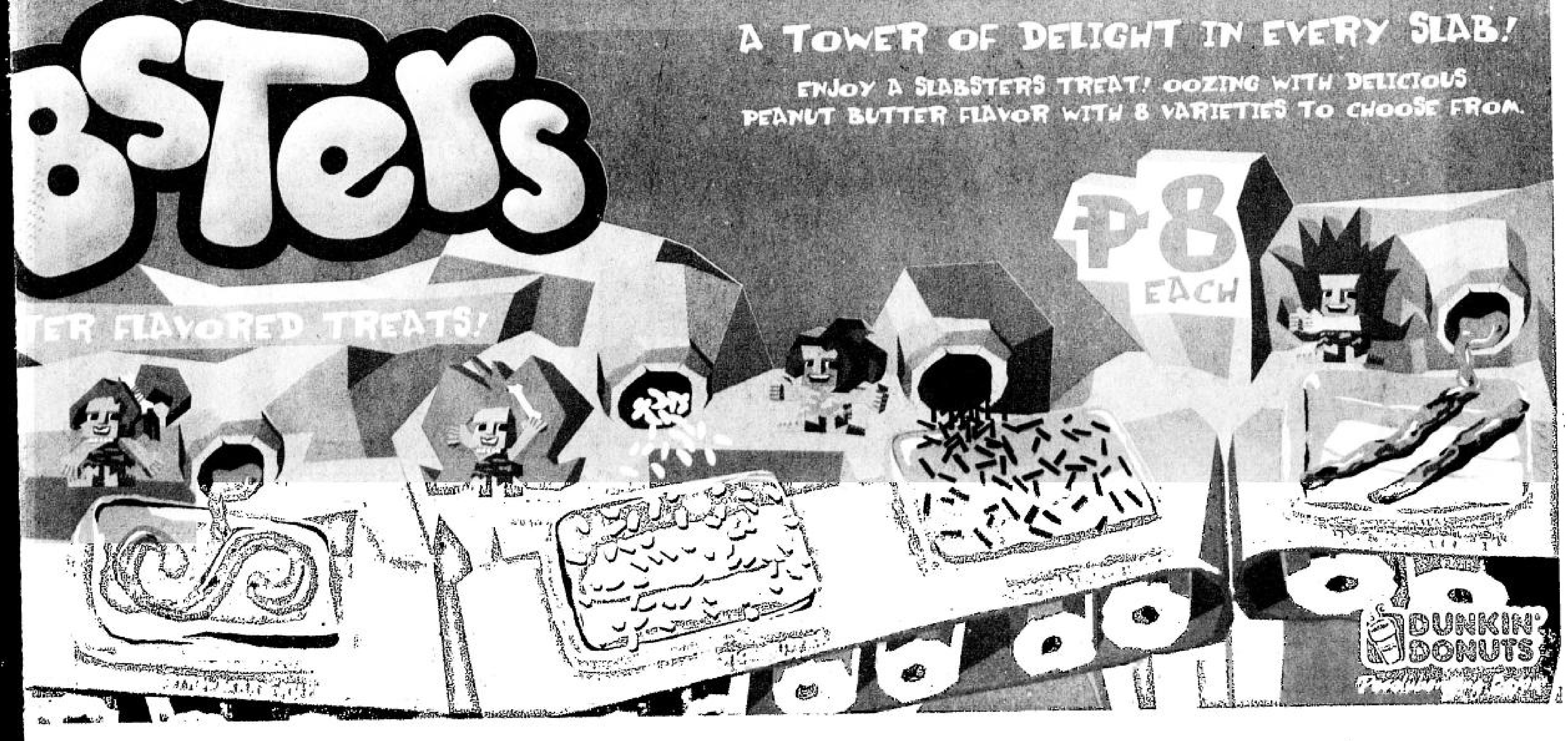
Limpe, also a successful business executive, has pursued his art with passion. He has had numerous exhibitions and has provided unselfish support to aspiring artists. His works—exploring the richness of marine life—are proof of his irrepressible spirit.

Perez is perhaps the country's most famous painter of churches. His works on colonial churches, as well as those outside the country, are showcased in the 2005 Calendar of Colonial Churches produced by San Agustin Church.

In the China show, Perez will present a diverse field of subjects all dear to the Pinoy, and reflecting the Pinoy character from birth to death.

"Cuatro Amigos" is all about the strong bonds of friendship, and the Filipino-Chinese connection that art, as in this show, reinforces.

E-mail author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com.



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John Silva conducts advocacy writing clinic

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The one-day workshop will review winning editorial pieces, teach techniques to make powerful persuasive points, gain more members to the cause and, most importantly, win the battle. All through concise, engaging, and even humorous prose.

The Advocacy Writing Workshop will be held on June 25, 8:30 a.m., at the Museum of the Filipino People, National Museum Complex, Agrifina Circle, Rizal Park, Manila. Fee is P3,500. Seats are limited. Call 0926-7299029 or 5275082. E-mail jsilva79@hotmail.com.

UP celebrates 97th year

IN THE SPIRIT of "Passion and Ingenuity," the UP will celebrate its 97th Foundation Day Anniversary on June 18 with activities highlighting the University's dedication to excellence in scholarship, development and public service.

Founded in 1908, the UP has used the passion and ingenuity of its faculty, students, and other members of its community to become a true national university.

The 97th Foundation Day celebration commences on June 13 with the varsity athletes from the UP College of Human Kinetics leading a parade around the academic oval at 8:30 a.m.

At 10 a.m. is the opening of "Works in Progress," an art exhibit at the Bulwagang Rizal. Cutting the ribbon will be UP president Emerlinda R. Roman and UP Diliman chancellor Sergio S. Cao. The UP Press will hold a book sale.

"Works in Progress" will feature College of Fine Arts' artists: Dean Virginia Dandan, Maria Victoria Abano, Leo Antonio Abaya, Benjamin Cabangis, Ruben de Jesus, Ernesto Enrique, Noel Farol, Roberto Feleo, Yasmin Almonte-Lantz, Ruben Malto, Jomel Obnamia, Leonardo Rosette, Jose Tanedo, and Nestor Vinluan. To speak in forums are Dandan on June 13, Cabangis and Vinluan on June 14, and Almonte Lantz and Abaya on June 16.

A concert by UP alumni performers will be held on June 18, 4:30 p.m., in Abelardo Hall. "UPSurge" features Joey Valenciano and band, Lester Demetillo and Becky Demetillo-Abraham, the UP Sax, Heber Bartolome, John Lesaca, Willie Nepomuceno and others.

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PIANIST Oliver Salonga

Government ignores national treasures

From page E1

month, opening orchestral seasons right and left.

Lately, two national and international prizewinners—pianist Oliver Salonga and cellist Victor Michael Coo—came home from the US where they are studying as full scholars to play with the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra in a special Independence Day gala at the Philamlife Theater.

Salonga, who topped all national competitions in Manila, also won in two concerto contests in the US.

Coo won in concerto competitions in Michigan, Florida and Indiana after topping the Namcya (National Music Competition for Young Artists) in Manila. He also got a special prize for chamber music in France.

Are these honors received by Filipino artists enough to make national officials and cultural institutions sit up and take notice?

Nope.

The musicians arrived unnoticed and without the invitation to Malacañang extended to Taiwan telenovela heroes and heroines, boxing champs and songbirds facing tax-evasion charges.

They arrived while the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) was holding a cultural summit called "The Power of Arts and Media for Values Formation: Breaking the Cycle of Corruption, Poverty, Pollution and Violence" in line with the President's program for "social transformation through culture and the arts."

But the artists were told the NCCA could not help produce their concert because it took three committee meetings to approve a grant, and a qualified project proponent registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission was needed to get things moving (now, isn't this reminiscent of a stomach-churning scene from the play "Anatomiya ng Korupsiyon.")

They were also told there were no slots for them in the national orchestra (at the moment) and they had to produce the concert themselves if they were to be heard by Manila audiences. The First Gentleman, Mike Arroyo, sent his regrets. He could not help (music would not help his private and public battles).

So what social transformation can be expected when national treasures are treated like second-class citizens by the same people and institutions supposed to protect their interests?

Last week, Salonga got a standing ovation in Baguio City. Both local and foreign members of the audience said it was the highlight of their visit to the City of Pines.

Coo guested in a special concert by the Adventist Church at the Francisco Santiago Hall last week, and the first person who noticed his solid, good sound was no other than the former First Lady, Imelda Romualdez Marcos, who brought to Manila one of the greatest cellists of his generation, Mstislav Rostropovich.

But Coo and Salonga, both brilliant talents, are young and idealistic so they will play their best when they perform with the Manila Philharmonic under the baton of Rodel Colmenar.

If you think these young artists are worthy of your support, watch them on Sunday.

For tickets, call 9017156 or 0918-7376901.

malakas ang pang-amoy...
CSI
ON JUNE 9

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For the 'Text Poets Society'

Makata sa Cellphone
Frank G. Rivera
Mga DALIT, DIONA, TANAGA, at iba pang TULANG SARI-SARI't mga BERSONG SALA-SALABID
"May talinong sari-sari at nakahihindik."
Rio Alma
National Artist for Literature

High technology and literature come into play in Frank Rivera's poetry

"Makata sa Cellphone"
By Frank G. Rivera
UST Publishing House, 2005, 116 pages

By Amadís Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

VERSATILE but underrated, Frank G. Rivera (founder of Sining Kambayoka) is a playwright, director, songwriter, actor and poet.

Verses flow naturally from his pen, or, more to the point, his cell phone. For he loves to regularly text his poems to his friends, whom he calls the members of "The Text Poets Society."

High technology and literature come into play in this recently launched first volume of mobile-phone poetry. (The poet is threatening a second volume.)

The poems are arranged not so much as to theme (which are numerous), but according to classical forms or types of poem distinguished by beat and rhythm. These are mostly short or haiku-like: *dalit*, *diona* and *tanaga*. The last part is a merry melange, or *"sari-sari't mga bersong."*

The language is often colloquial, street-smart, playful, irreverent, folksy, mock-serious in tone but at times formal, angry and indignant.

The themes are timely (elections, Holy Week, etc.) as well as timeless, as in the lament of a wounded heart: *"Binugbog mo ang dibdib/Nilunod sa panganib/Puso'y di pa rin manhid."*

Disillusion

The political poems reflect Rivera's disillusion with the present administration, and give way to poems on nature (which is sometimes a warning) and on love (romantic, treacherous), with the poet alternating between hope and despair.

Part I ("Isang Daa't Isang Dalit") showcases the national consciousness of the poet, who started as a Peta (Philippine Education Theater Association) member under Cecile Guidote. The imagery can be brutal as in: *"Parang masakit na ngipin/Bayang nagpapaalipin/Bulok dapat nang bunutin..."*

The 300-year history of the country is summed up in one stanza: *"Inanakan ng Kastila/Sa Amerikano nadapa/Bumangon nga at lumaya/Sa Hapon lang tumihaya."*

There are satirical digs at prominent personalities: *"Erap may Senadora/Laarni saka Guia/First Gentleman ni Gloria/Laki ay pang-dalawa!"*

There is a Paeteño's love for the Tagalog language: *"Sa dilang umuusal/Ang wikang minamahal/Sintamis ng arnibal."*

When he hears of the death of a friend, the scholar-columnist Doreen Gamboa Fernandez, the poet is plunged into mourning. But he masters his grief, and gazes at the moonlit sky in tribute to the departed: *"tumingin sa langit, may bagong bituin."*

Rivera has the true poet's flair for compressed language and striking imagery. What the actor Sir Ralph Richardson once said about a book about Shakespeare, written by John Masefield, applies to this short volume of poetry as well: "It is light in the hand but voluminous in the mind."

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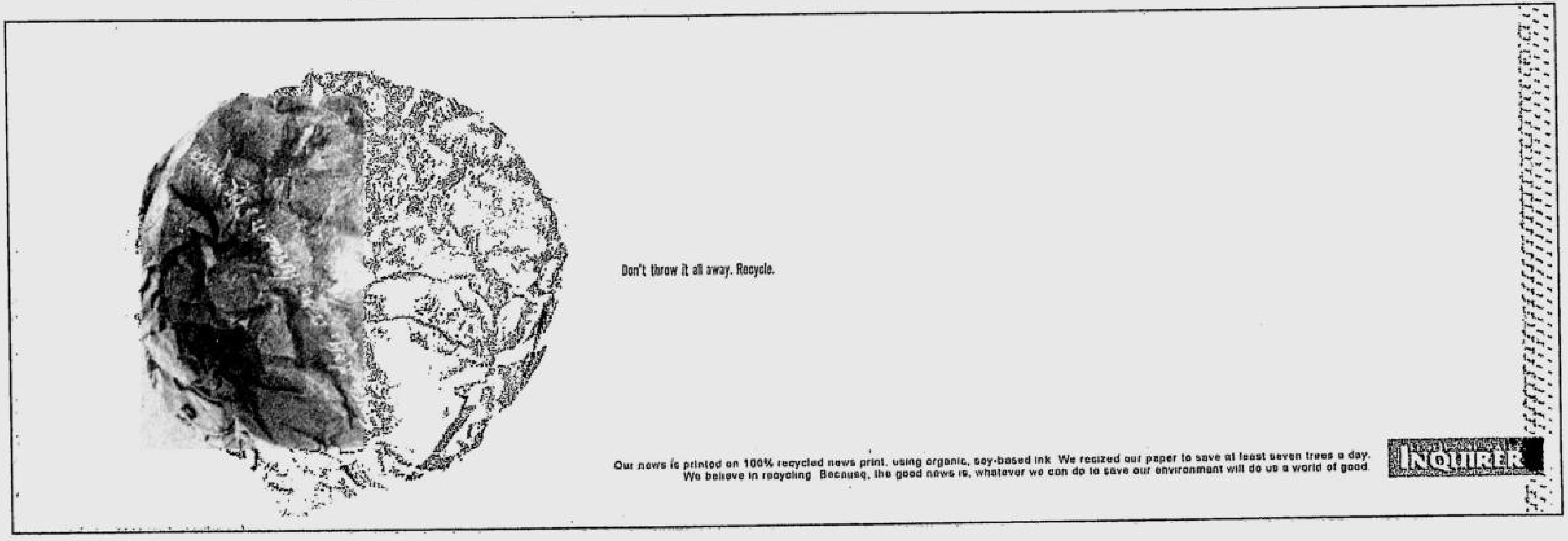
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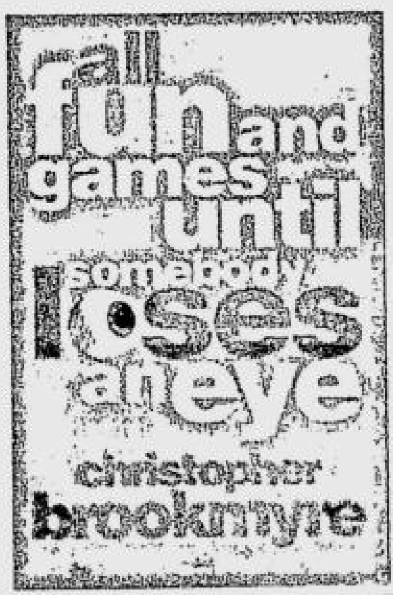
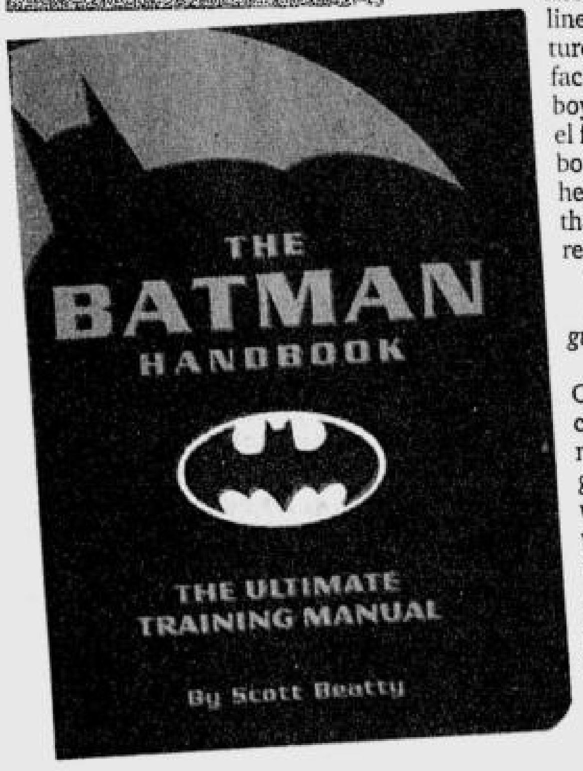
INQUIRER

Hot June reads

Fortress Besieged





WITH A NEW store just opened at the Gateway Mall, Araneta Center, Cubao, Fully Booked continues to bring readers the widest range of titles to suit every interest and literary preference. Check out these great books for June.

"A Long Way Down"

By Nick Hornby; Penguin, 257 pages

One New Year's Eve, four very different characters find themselves at the top of the same building with one aim in mind—to jump. Each one tells his (or her) story, and as these unfold, they realize they have even less in common than they thought. Fans of Nick Hornby will not be disappointed with the latest novel by this best-selling author.

"The Undomestic Goddess"

By Sophie Kinsella; Bantam Press, 365 pages

The author of the "Shópaholic" series is back with this story of a non-traditional woman who knows nothing of cooking, baking, laundry or ironing. When this high-powered lawyer takes a wrong turn in life and lands in the last position she expects to find herself in, that of a housekeeper, she finds herself learning more than her Cambridge education and years of law school could teach.

"Misfortune by Wesley Stace"

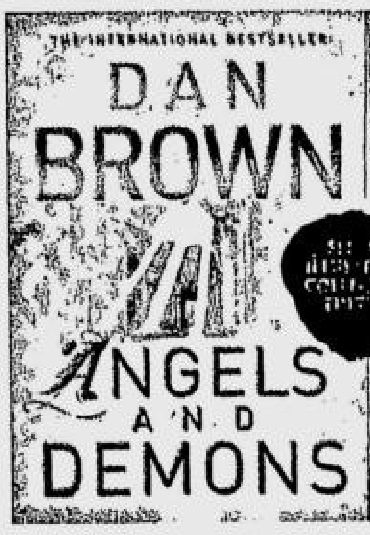
By Jonathan Cape; 528 pages

The richest man in 19th-century England brings home a baby named Rose to continue his family line. Everything seems picture-perfect except for the fact that Rose is, in fact, a boy. Hailed as a gothic novel for modern times, this is both entertaining and heartwarming, and one that will be passed on and read again and again.

"Fortress Besieged"

By Qian Zhongshu; Penguin, 426 pages

Touted as "the greatest Chinese novel of the 20th century," this classic is finally translated into English. Set in the 1930s with the Sino-Japanese war as a background, a man returns to Shanghai with a phony degree and gets a teaching job at a small-town university. The author uses satire to express opinions on the adoption of Western literary traditions and philosophy in middle-class China.



"All Fun and Games Until Somebody Loses An Eye"

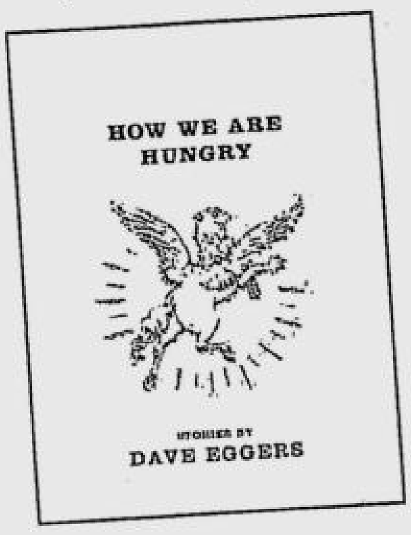
By Christopher Brookmyre; Little, Brown, 407 pages

From an author best known for his acerbic wit, this new novel is about a 40-year-old grandmother who suddenly becomes a skilled secret agent in an attempt to keep her family together. Exciting and filled with moments that will have you laughing out loud.

"How We Are Hungry"

By Dave Eggers; Penguin, 224 pages

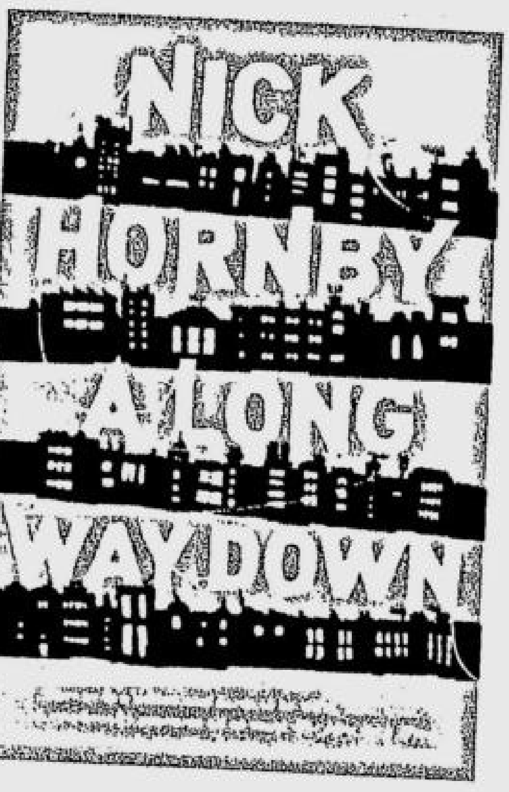
McSweeney's editor and Pulitzer Prize-nominated young novelist Dave Eggers is back with his third title, a collection of short stories that focuses mainly on characters struggling to escape the difficulties in their lives. This new book, which reads more like a journal, showcases his eloquence and talent just as well as his previous works have done.



"Bindis and Brides"

By Nisha Minhas; Simon and Schuster, 485 pages

After getting out of an arranged marriage, Zarleena Shankar starts her own business, an Indian bridal wear shop, which proves to be quite successful. Will she be as lucky in love though? With the help a handsome new friend, she sets out to prove that she can do just fine without a man in her life, but things may not turn out the way she plans.



"The Batman Handbook"

By Scott Beatty; Quirk Books, 191 pages

Anyone who's ever wanted to become a caped crusader now has the know-how with the help of this ultimate training manual. From basics like throwing grappling hooks and making your outfit to rescuing damsels in distress and bulletproofing your Batmobile, this book has all you need, except of course, for superpowers.

"It's About Time: Great Recipes for Everyday Life"

By Michael Schlow, foreword by Mario Batali; Steerforth Press, 219 pages

Despite all the technological gadgets we have nowadays that are supposed to make our lives easier, we seem to have less time to do the things that matter, like eat. This author realizes the importance of time, or the lack thereof, and presents a series of recipes that take only as long to prepare as the time one has on hand.

"Illustrated Angels and Demons"

By Dan Brown; Bantam Press, 464 pages

While most people have read the prequel after its best-selling successor, this limited-edition coffee table book is a must-add to any book-lover's collection as it is filled with full-color images of all the clues and settings described in the text.

All titles are available at Fully Booked, Level R1, Power Plant Mall, Rockwell Center, Makati City (tel. 7565001-04) and 2/L, Gateway Mall, Araneta Center, Cubao (9114960 or 9134543).

Bindis & Brides

Misfortune

PWU clarifies state of QC campus

THE PHILIPPINE Women's University-Jose Abad Santos Memorial School, the School of Nursing and other tertiary courses will continue operating at the PWU campus on Edsa, Quezon City, this school year, school officials said.

The PWU continues to own one hectare of the campus. "The area is more than sufficient for the needs of students, considering that many other schools just rent their premises while PWU owns its building and the facilities and lots on which these stand," PWU president Dr. Amelou B. Reyes said.

Jardine Land Inc., which seeks to obtain possession of the school property in Quezon City, has control only of the portion of the campus it has foreclosed, officials said.

PWU is now 85 years old. Its Edsa campus will be turning 50 next year. The school has absolutely no plan to stop operations, Reyes said.

Jardine Land has filed a writ of possession with the courts. Until the courts issue the writ, they cannot take possession. Even if the writ is issued, Jardine cannot take possession of the one hectare where the campus stands, the school management said.

Visual pleasures versified

By Ralph Semino Galán
Contributor

DESIRE in its many declensions is seldom tackled in Philippine poetry with such a great amount of candor and charisma, for sexual matters, like so many things better left unsaid, have always been considered as a taboo in our traditional, almost medieval, Roman Catholic society.

But Arvin Abejo Mangohig, in his first volume of verses titled "The Gaze: Poems" (Quezon City: UP Press, 2004, 87 pages), dares to transgress this forbidden ground twice over by textualizing the dangerous geography of gay love and lust.

In his gay erotic poetry, the poet commemorates the consummation of passion and its aftermath, love reciprocated or unrequited, and the myriad constellation of stars and scars connected to the fantasy/ reality dichotomy of romantic relationships.

The title poem provides the thematic thread of the collection, revolving around the bittersweet landscape of casual encounters and sexual escapades: "I am what makes you go to fractal places/ what makes you believe in meetings by chance." ["The Gaze"].

There is much voyeurism and scopophilia in Mangohig's work, and nothing and no one is spared of his persona's penetrating homosexual gaze: nameless gay men having sex in restrooms, lovers real or imagined, himself masturbating, even the lovemaking of his own parents.

Samples

Here are some exemplary samples: "When I saw them, my first two men, making love/ right in front of me, beautiful in their context,/ in a public toilet, in the middle of the day,/" ["Anonymous"], "After the first bout of lovemaking, spent/ yet strangely very much rested, gathering energy,/ I would ask only lovers who I knew loved me back/ when and where they got that particular scar//" [How Not to Forget a Lover], "Days and weeks and months of staying inside/ the house, touching no one but myself/ I feel my skin growing thick above me,/ ["Metamorphosis"], "Someday I will ask my mother/ how they made me: doggy-style?/ missionary? some position that/ can be represented by a number?// ["The Voyeur].

Mangohig also celebrates certain components of the male anatomy in a subsection of the book aptly titled "Body Parts." In evocative-cum-provocative poems like "wrist," "armpit," "nipples," "ear," "birthmark," "toenail," "pubic hair," "back," "thigh," "eye," "finger," he catalogues every minute detail of the homosexual physique.

ARVIN ABEJO MANGOHIG
THE GAZE
POEMS

Jamake Highwater, in his very fascinating book titled "The Language of Visions: Meditations on Myth and Metaphor," compares "The Hanged Man" of the tarot pack with homosexuality as metaphor. He says, "Homosexuality haunts the public conscience because it is feared as a latent and contagious matter of choice. Yet, through all of this, homosexuality remains a profound metaphor of the unbounded possibilities of desire, just as homophobia persists as a symbol of the limits of the capacity of human beings to cherish one another."

Central trope

Interestingly enough, Mangohig makes use of the hanged man as a central trope, whether consciously or unconsciously, in one of his poems: "I am hanging upside down. I have fallen/ off the earth for sure this time..." [Out-of-Body Experience]. For the homosexual situation is a life in suspension, but this inverse position is also the source of his resistance, if not outright rebellion, against the strict moral codes of patriarchal society. Since the hanged man, despite his predicament, manages to smile playfully at the world and its prevalent heterosexism, which the black lesbian feminist Audre Lorde describes as "the belief in the inherent superiority of one pattern of loving and thereby its right to dominance."

But the best poems in the collection are those that deal with genuine desire and true love, for Mangohig is more than capable of rhapsodizing the heartfelt sentiments of a hopeless romantic. In pieces like "Bodies," "Our Own Good," "At the Train Station," "Last Night," "The End of the World," "The Heart-Gut," "At the Library," "Since," "Faithfulness," "First," "(Postmodern) Love Poem," and "A Lover is About to Break My Heart", the poetic persona's byronic self comes to the fore, volcanic but vulnerable, hurting but hurtling through the coordinates of homosexual time and space.

The most poignant of these love poems deserves to be quoted in full: "For no reason other than love/ while shaving I think of you and grow careless// So that my face has become/ a record of the slips of my razor// Each nick adding value/ to my history of bleeding.// ["Shaving"]

Mangohig's gay erotic poetry pushes the envelope of what can be properly verbalized in verses, and thus valorized as art. But by daring to speak about what for most people is unspeakable, he defies the conventions of polite society and good literature through what Jonathan Dollimore labels as a "transgressive aesthetic."

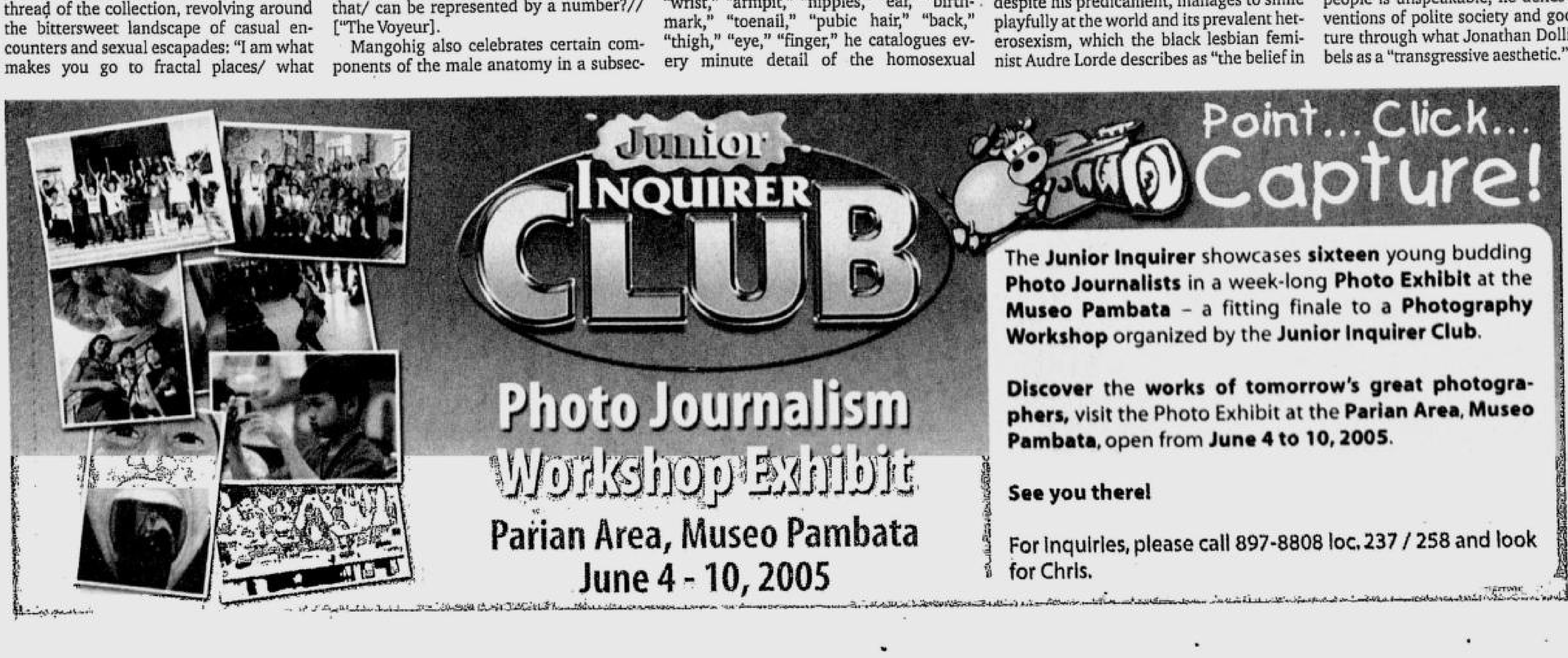


Photo Journalism Workshop Exhibit
Parian Area, Museo Pambata
June 4 - 10, 2005

The **Junior Inquirer** showcases **sixteen** young budding **Photo Journalists** in a week-long **Photo Exhibit** at the **Museo Pambata** – a fitting finale to a **Photography Workshop** organized by the **Junior Inquirer Club**.

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See you there!

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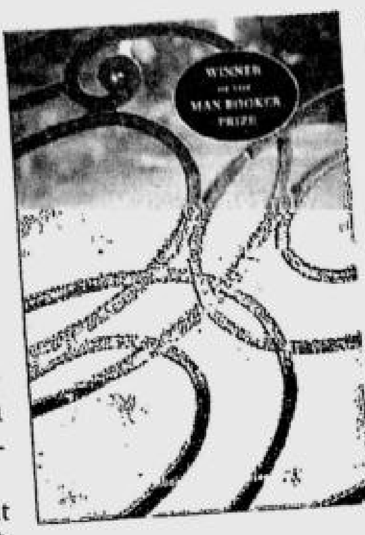
Book club tackles Kinsella's 'Shopaholic' and Hollinghurst's 'Line of Beauty'



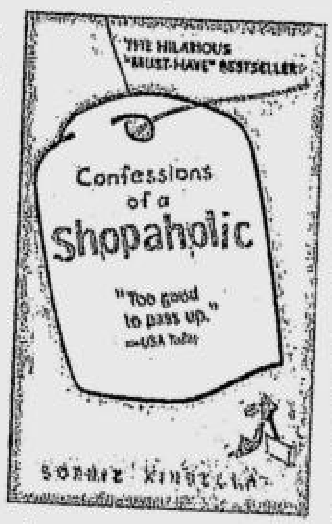
SOPHIE Kinsella's "Confessions of a Shopaholic" is the first book in her "Shopaholic" series. Rebecca Bloomwood has a life that only others can dream of—a fabulous flat in London, a nice set of socialite friends and a closet full of the season's latest clothes.

The only problem is that she can't afford any of it. After all the Visa notices, the overdue bank drafts, the failed quick-money, is there hope for this obsessive-compulsive shopper?

In the tradition of British chick-lit, Kinsella offers readers another one of the quirky, lovable heroines who save themselves just in time for a happy ending.

Take a look at another side of English life with Alan Hollinghurst's "The Line of Beauty." Mingle with England's famous Tory ministers, stiff-lipped aristocrats, and glittery movie stars through the eyes of outsider, Nick Guest.

Distanced from the society because of his sexual orientation and his social class, Nick, however, just couldn't keep away. He craves for the privileges of the wealthy, but as fate has it, he is all preference and no possession. Travel the playground of the elite, the parties, sexual liaisons, French vacations and endless games. It is survival of the fittest and as Nick learns, if you're going to play, you better know the rules.


THE HILARIOUS "MUST-HAVE" BESTSELLER
Confessions of a Shopaholic
"Too good to pass up." —USA Today
SOPHIE KINSELLA

The PowerBook Club will be discussing "Confessions of a Shopaholic" on June 28, 6:30 p.m., at PowerBooks Greenbelt; and "The Line of Beauty" on June 29, 6:30 p.m., at PowerBooks Megamall.

Powercard Plus holders can get a special treat—the first eight non-Book Club members get a featured book for free.

PowerBooks has branches at Greenbelt 4 (7576428/29), Megamall (635-2898 to 99), Alabang (8505662 to 63), and Glorietta (7527075).

Anvil releases new edition of Lumbera anthology

ANVIL Publishing Inc. has released the latest edition of the best-selling "Philippine Literature: A History and Anthology" by Bienvenido Lumbera and Cynthia Nograles Lumbera. The classic college textbook, used by leading colleges and universities for almost 20 years, has undergone significant changes owing developments in scholarly research in Philippine literature.

The first edition of the book was released in 1982 and the subsequent revision was released in 1997. In the foreword, the book authors state their objective of providing teachers and students with the overview of the development of Philippine literature. The revised edition includes selections from the different regions to showcase "a comparatively more coherent picture of Philippine literature as a multilingual body of works produced by a people, with one voice that seeks to claim their distinct cultural identity."

The latest edition features the same literary pieces—riddles, proverbs, short poems, songs, myths, folk tales, legend, epic and short fiction—all translated in English. The English translations will definitely attract a broader audience for Philippine literature particularly the descendants of expatriate Filipinos who are curious about their cultural heritage.

Bienvenido Lumbera is a recipient of the 1993 Ramon Magsaysay Award in Journalism, Literature and Creative Communications and is currently a professor of the Department of Filipino and Philippine Literature at the University of the Philippines, while Cynthia Nograles Lumbera is an assistant professor of Department of English at the Ateneo de Manila University.

The book is available at National Book Store.

OFW philanthropy confab set at UST June 9-10

MILLIONS of dollars in development aid from overseas Filipinos have attracted local NGOs, foundations, as well as Pinoy groups abroad, to converge for a conference on philanthropy by Pinoys abroad.

The conference, "Good News for the Poor: A Conference on Filipino Diaspora Philanthropy," to be held at the University of Santo Tomas-Thomas Aquinas Research Complex (TARC) on June 9-10, will see participants discussing how remittances can be harnessed strategically for the country's benefit.

Data from the Bangko Sentral in 2003 showed that overseas Filipinos have sent US$218 million of remittances as gifts and donations to Philippine banks—benefiting mostly the rural poor. The amount is on top of the US$7.6 billion that migrants remitted to their families.

The conference will also highlight the need to support the issues of the 7.763 million-strong overseas Filipinos sector, which provides the country's major economic resources that have saved the Philippines from economic ruin.

Overseas Filipino groups from Asia-Pacific, Middle Eastern, European and American continents, foundations and NGOs in the country, the diplomatic missions and international organizations in the Philippines, academics, and representatives from the media will grace the conference.

Organized by the Institute for Migration and Development Issues (IMDI), in cooperation with the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) and UST Office for Community Development, the conference is supported by the Peace and Equity Foundation, Asia Foundation, and Cebu Pacific.

Contact Jeremaiah Opiniano of IMDI (ofw_philanthropy@yahoo.com, or +639178238260), or Regina Galias of CFO (63-02-5618321 local 602, or reg_galias@yahoo.com).

Everyday greeting cards

Hallmark offers a wide array of Everyday Cards that communicate your thoughts to your loved ones. So, next time you get tongue-tied in expressing your feelings, don't say "*Wala lang,*" let a Hallmark card do the talking for you. Available at National Book Store.

E-Cards via texting courtesy of Hallmark

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Bookstore activities for this month

BE inspired, enlightened and entertained by PowerBooks Specialty Store's lineup of exciting activities for June.

On June 11, 3-6 p.m., PowerBooks Greenbelt, learn from the Church Strengthening Ministry how to develop passion for excellence in the workplace, with Rex Resurreccion as speaker. Another topic is pursuing the "3-C" life, by Dr. Narry Santos.

The "Guide to Entrepreneurship" by Dr. Reuben Mondejar and Alexander Gilles will be launched on June 18, 6-8 p.m. at PowerBooks Greenbelt, while on June 24, 7 p.m. at the same venue, poets and artists from De La Salle University's Malate Literary Folio will present poetry readings and light music.

On June 27, 6:30 p.m., PowerBooks Greenbelt, join the Philippine Animal Welfare Society and special guest Pol Medina Jr. as they discuss books all animal lovers will enjoy.

Then, on June 28, 6 p.m., PowerBooks Greenbelt, devote your spare time helping the less fortunate by attending Hands on Manila's volunteer orientation and learning the best way to go about it.

The schedule for the arts and crafts and storytelling sessions are as follows:

June 11, 3 p.m., Powerbooks Alabang
June 18, 3 p.m., Powerbooks Megamall
June 25, 3 p.m., Powerbooks Alabang

Enjoy an afternoon of fun and learning as Esteban Early Development Center and Cambridge Child Development Centre conduct arts & crafts and storytelling sessions.

There will be cooking demonstrations with Pillsbury on all Saturdays of June, 4 p.m. at PowerBooks Greenbelt, while Maveric Vision International Seminars will hold English proficiency lessons on these dates:

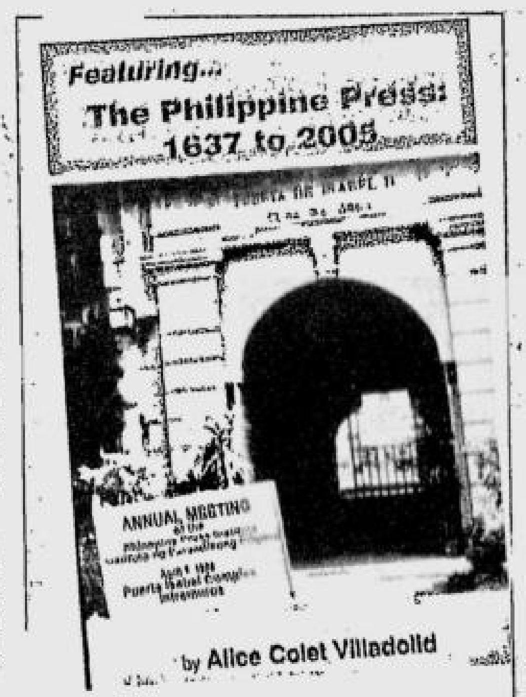
June 10, 6-7 p.m., PowerBooks Greenbelt
June 17, 6-7 p.m., PowerBooks Greenbelt

Business-related seminars, on the other hand, will be on these dates:

June 9, 1:30-5:30 p.m., Concepts and Tools for Effective Negotiations
June 16, 1:30-5:30 p.m., Effective Business Writing
June 23, 1:30-5:30 p.m., Tools for Organization Review
June 27, 1:30-5:30 p.m., Keys to Successful Communication
June 30, 1:30-5:30 p.m., Time Management for Greater Achievement

Call Grace del Rosario of Business One at 6315052 for more details.

PowerBooks Specialty Store is a full-service specialty bookstore with branches at Greenbelt 4 (7576428/29), Megamall (6352898 to 99), Alabang (8505662 to 63), and Glorietta (7527075).



New book on the Philippine press just out

"FEATURING... The Philippine Press: 1637 to 2005" by Alice Colet Villadolid takes a close look at Philippine newspapers from their pious beginnings in the 17th century to their troubled status in this era.

The 122-page paperback now in many bookstores traces the history of print media in this country based on the historical accounts of O.D. Corpuz, Juan Francisco, Wenceslao Retana (as translated by Rodolfo Nazareno and Elena Pena), Jaime Laya and Esperanza Gatbonton, Crispin Maslog, Florangel Braid and Ramon Tuason.

The tabloid "Sucesos Felices" (Glad Tidings), written and printed in 1637 by the Chinese-Filipino Tomas Pinpin, earlier acclaimed as the Father of Philippine Printing, is cited by the author as the first Filipino newsletter.

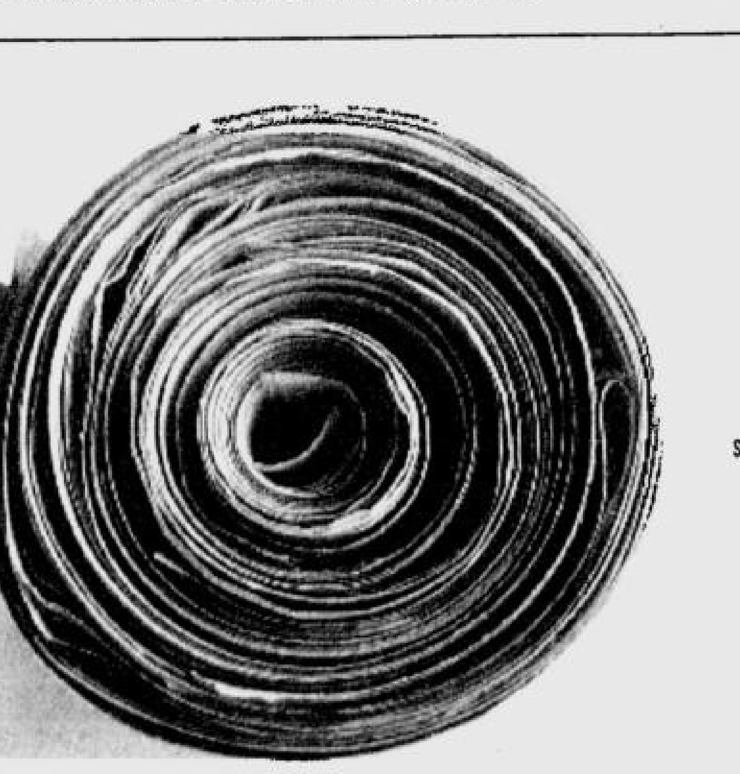
The author takes the reader on a walking tour of where the Ilustrado newspapermen walked and worked. She describes the locations of "Diario de Manila" where "Kalayaan" was also composed, of "La Independencia" and "El Renacimiento." The book is illustrated with pictures of the offices of 20th-century newspapers, courtesy of researchers of Miriam College.

Stories about the National Press Club, media suppression under martial law, the Alternative Press and the Foreign Correspondents are told first person as Colet-Villadolid had worked as reporter since the 1950s—first for the Manila Chronicle, then Saturday Herald, Mr. & Ms., Philippine Graphic, Asiaweek, Newsweek International and The New York Times.

When no longer young like other reporters, Alice Villadolid worked as spokesperson and chief of the Presidential Press Staff, then executive director of the Philippine Press Institute, finally as lecturer at the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication and at her alma mater, the University of Santo Tomas.

The author is thus able to look at the present problems of the media from an insider's point of view. She writes about deteriorating media values and the corrupting culture that stifles present-day newspapers; although in the Preface, the author says for love of the press, she could not write enough about its shame.

ALICE Colet Villadolid



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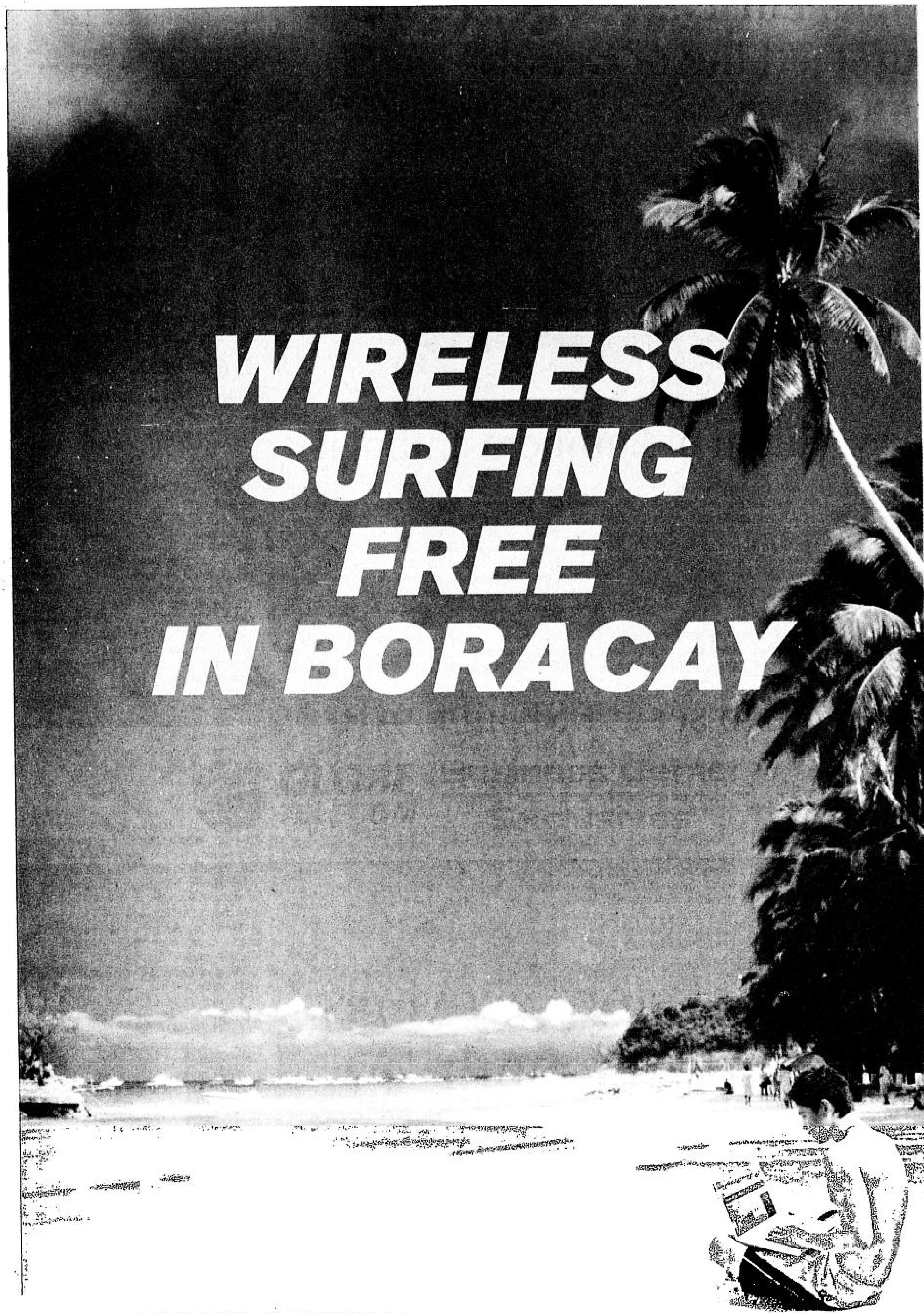

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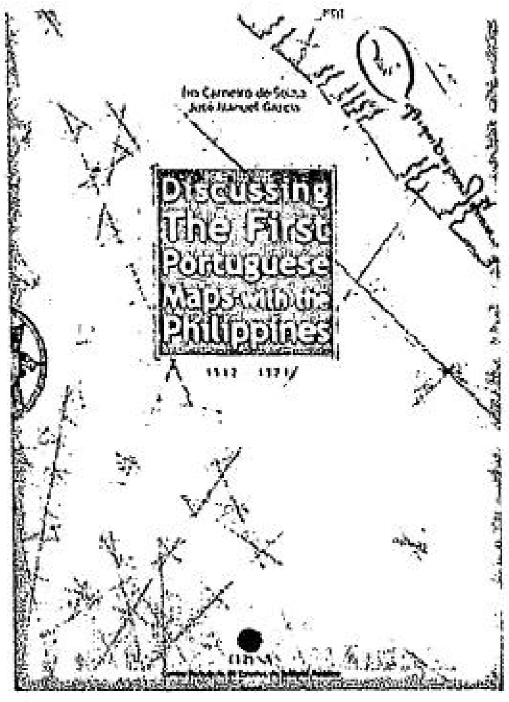


Portuguese scholar to launch book

A DISTINGUISHED scholar and academic returns to the Philippines to give a lecture and launch a book he co-authored, "The First Portuguese Maps with the Philippines, 1512-1572," on June 9, 5 p.m., at the conference room of the Central Library of the University of Santo Tomas.

In his book, Prof. Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, associate aggregate professor in the History Department, University of Porto, Portugal and director of the Portuguese Center for the Study of Southeast Asia (Cepesa), highlights around 29 maps from the 16th-17th centuries made by various Portuguese cartographers and found in Portuguese archives.

The volume is the first-in-a-series that would eventually include various kinds of archival documents to show the long-standing Portuguese affair with the Philippines. It is also De Sousa's second book collaboration on maps with Prof. Jose Manuel Garcia of the Portuguese National Archives.

De Sousa first came to the Philippines in October 2002 to give a lecture in conjunction with the exhibit, "Portuguese Maps and Drawings of Southeast Asia and the Philippines," at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila which was made possible by Portuguese Ambassador João Caetano da Silva.

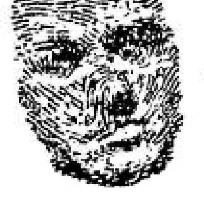
Since then, two other seminars at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila and an international conference at the University of Macau have been held to enable historians, scholars and researchers from the Philippines, Portugal and Macau to have a healthy exchange of views and plan out possible areas of cooperation.

This lecture and book launch are in celebration of the Portuguese National Day on June 10. It is organized by the UST Office of Academic Affairs, Embassy of Portugal, UST Central Library and Cepesa.

De Sousa will hold the Fernão Magalhães Professorial Chair in History at the University of Santo Tomas this academic year.

Email eloise_ust@hotmail.com or call 7314003.

IVO Carneiro de Sousa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Celebrating 25 Years of Service to the Banking Industry

Messages

MY warmest felicitations to the good men and women of the Philippine Clearing House Corporation (PCHC) on your 25th Year of Computerized Check-Exchange Operations.

I laud the Philippine Clearing House Corporation for being an active partner of government in providing, maintaining and rendering sound banking practices. Your effort to promote faster and safer exchange of values between clearing participants nationwide is of great help in ensuring the advancement of our national economy.

Your being the premier payment infrastructure in the banking industry in our country speaks well of your commitment to serving our people to the best of your knowledge and skills. I am confident that you will continue the good work of 25 years. With your dedicated service and competence, I am sure that we will be able to build our nation on strong foundations.

May this event bring more substantial and positive changes towards national stability and economic prosperity. Together, we shall beat the odds.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

GMArroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

On behalf of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, I congratulate the Philippine Clearing House Corp as it celebrates its 25th anniversary.

That the event coincides with the completion of its nationwide check clearing conversion program makes this milestone doubly significant. The adoption of a single check clearing system should generate significant savings for PCHC and efficiency improvements that will benefit customers.

Although an increasing number of payments are being made electronically, it is clear that checks will continue to play an important role in the country's payments system, averaging nearly 600,000 checks per day in 2004.

We at the BSP are therefore looking forward to the day when PCHC can further improve its check clearing time, possibly to a uniform two days nationwide, from the present three days to seven depending on the region. This should foster more economic activities in local communities with the faster availability of funds.

Mabuhay ang PCHC!

AMANDO M. TETANGCO, JR.
Officer-in-Charge
Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

AS PCHC celebrates its 25th anniversary, the Bankers Association of the Philippines extends its warmest greetings and congratulations to the officers and staff of the Philippine Clearing House Corporation.

From the time the BAP together with the BSP created and organized PCHC, the corporation developed into one of the pillars of the Philippine banking operations expanding its area of coverage to 67 logical clearing regions nationwide, thus shortening clearing time and establishing uniformity of the clearance procedures among the defined regions.

PCHC's contribution to the efficiency of banking operations is remarkable through its efforts to continuously upgrade the clearing and payment systems in its vision to be the premier payment infrastructure of the banking industry.

The banking system through the BAP extends its deepest appreciation to PCHC's continued development and expansion of its operations. Congratulations and more power!

CESAR E.A. VIRATA
President
Bankers Association of the Philippines

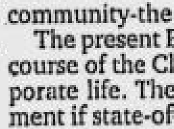
On behalf of the 62 member banks of the Chamber of Thrift Banks, I would like to congratulate the officers and staff of the Philippine Clearing House Corporation on its 25th anniversary.

Having achieved the corporate status as the exclusive cheque clearing service provider for the country (making it possible the computerized check-exchange operations among banks), PCHC maintained its course in achieving its corporate objectives while keeping abreast with the rapid changes in the information technology.

Moreover, we commend PCHC in its effort to fulfilling its mission of establishing a single clearing region for the entire country. With more regions defined under one cheque-clearing environment, banks can look forward to gaining more benefits as a result of the adoption of a common system.

Congratulations and more power.

BENJAMIN J. YAMBAO
President
Chamber of Thrift Banks



I congratulate the men and women who organized the Philippine Clearing House 25 years ago!

The Clearing House has built a reputation of committed service to the banking industry. It serves as an icon of cooperation among banks, whose services extend to the larger community-the banking public!

The present Board of Directors is privileged to be steering the course of the Clearing House at this exciting juncture of its corporate life. The Board is committed to pursuing the establishment if state-of-the art check clearing technology, and, has embarked on the development of the framework that will ensure continuing superior service to the financial industry.

The next 25 years will be challenging! But with dedicated professionals and staff, efficient process management, and application of technology, we will achieve the vision of a strong and stable Philippine Clearing House-the country's premier payments infrastructure!

Once again, congratulations!

BENJAMIN P. CASTILLO
Chairman
Philippine Clearing House Corp.

PCHC nears completion of nationwide clearing operations

THE Philippine Clearing House Corporation has added seven clearing regions into its expanded greater Manila area and integrated local clearing exchange, bringing the total number of regions having the 3-day float for clearing cheques to a total of 16 regions.

This development is part of PCHC's implementation of the nationwide clearing expansion project approved by Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas in October 2003.

The integration of the remaining 20 BSP regions is ongoing and is scheduled for completion by the end of June 2005.

Four regions, two in Luzon, one in the Visayas and one in Mindanao will be integrated into the expanded GMA/integrated local clearing exchange. The remaining 16 regions will be included in the electronic cheque clearing system with physical items exchanged locally.

PCHC president Francisco Yap, Jr. reports the organization has met the processing performance targets in spite of a 5.28 percent increase in cheque volume due to the integration of additional regions into the expanded local clearing exchange and the creation of additional out-of-town regions.

PCHC chairman Benjamin Castillo said the nationwide cheque clearing operations "will be achieved by upgrading our network infrastructure and implementing imaging technology-platforms that will enable us to develop more value-added products and services."

PCHC is a private corporation established by the Bankers Association of the Philippines and is responsible for the bulk clearing of cheques in the country. The corporation tasked primarily to automate the exchange of clearing items among member banks is currently celebrating its 25th anniversary.

To date, 91.6 percent of all clearing items in the country are being coursed through the PCHC, where 81 percent represents cheques cleared within the standard clearing period of three days, and 10.6 percent under the inter-regional clearing window of 5 to 7 days.

In PCHC's annual stockholder's report, Castillo announced the creation of additional committees to provide the organizational framework for and institutionalization of good corporate governance.

These new committees are Audit and Compliance, Arbitration Oversight and Ad Hoc Matters, which now "provide direction and focus for critical aspects of managing the business."

A combined total of 146.95 million clearing items were processed in the expanded GMA/local clearing exchange and the inter-regional clearing operations which accounted for 26.22 million clearing items alone (9.75 percent higher compared to last year).

However, excluding the effect of additional items introduced by the seven regions integrated in 2004, the Expanded GMA/Integrated Local Clearing Exchange actually registered a 1.42 percent drop in clearing items or 1.97 million items.

The PCHC also provides electronic payment services such as PDDTS (Philippine Domestic Dollar Transfer System) and EPCS (Electronic Peso Clearing and Settlement). PDDTS ($) transactions recorded a 3.6 percent growth in volume count while the value increased by 17.9 percent to an average monthly amount of $36.9 million.

On the other hand, EPCS (P) volume count inched up 1.6 percent to an average monthly volume of 54,144 transactions valued at P25.38 billion, an increase of 11.95 percent versus 2003.

The PCHC is now a majority shareholder in the Cash Management Center of the Philippines, Inc., a joint undertaking by the BAP and the BSP.

"The P100-million equity symbolizes a commitment to continually explore other avenues of allied services that will benefit the industry," Castillo said.

PCHC Board of Directors 2005-2006

PCHC executive staff

Senior Management committee. Shown are (from left) Atty. William R. Veto, legal counsel/corporate secretary; Juan G. Coreces, treasurer; Jose F. Unson, committee chairman and Francisco V. Yap, Jr., president.

> The PCHC also provides electronic payment services such as PDDTS (Philippine Domestic Dollar Transfer System) and EPCS (Electronic Peso Clearing and Settlement)

History of computerized clearing in the Philippines

DURING the early 1960s, the Philippine banking system entered a period of proliferation. More banks were being established at a brisk pace. The volume of paper checks climbed rapidly.

With the accelerated volume of checks floating in the banking system, the need for standardization in the formats and sizes of checks was conceptualized (as early as February, 1965) as the first step towards automating the check clearing system.

In August, 1970, at the membership meeting of the Bank Administration Institute (BAI), a Joint Commission on MICR Clearing (JCMC) was proposed to be created to conduct a formal, sustained study of MICR clearing operations.

The JCMC was formally constituted on June 28, 1971. The JCMC rendered its report and recommendations to the CB Governor after its observation trip abroad on August 1974.

Not until January 1975 did the CBP suggested the formation by the BAP of a private organization to handle MICR clearing with a proviso that the CBP would continue to be responsible for the bookkeeping of the debits and credits to the banks' clearing account, but the physical processing and sorting of the items will be the responsibility of the private organization.

Subsequently, on July 22, 1976, the BAP Board approved the establishment of a Private Clearing House under the above cited terms set by the BSP, thus the era of automated processing of checks came into being after more than 12 years of hibernation since the standardization of checks was initiated.

On July 1977, the Philippine Clearing House Corporation (PCHC) was incorporated as a private co-equally owned corporation by all commercial banking institutions enlisted as members of the Bankers Association of the Philippines (BAP), then 32 in number, purposely to automate, through the medium of MICR-encoded checks, the existing manual clearing system then in operation.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) formally registered the "private organization" as the Philippine Clearing House Corporation (PCHC), making it a juridical body with a legal responsibility.

Notwithstanding the exclusivity provision found in its corporate charter, the PCHC subsequently accommodated the thrift banks as clearing participants in functional collaboration with the Central Bank of the Philippines (CBP) which authorized said thrift banks to operate checking accounts and use the facilities of the PCHC for clearing purposes.

Finally, on June 6, 1980, the first MICR clearing commenced in Metro Manila and the automation of check clearing in the Philippines was realized.

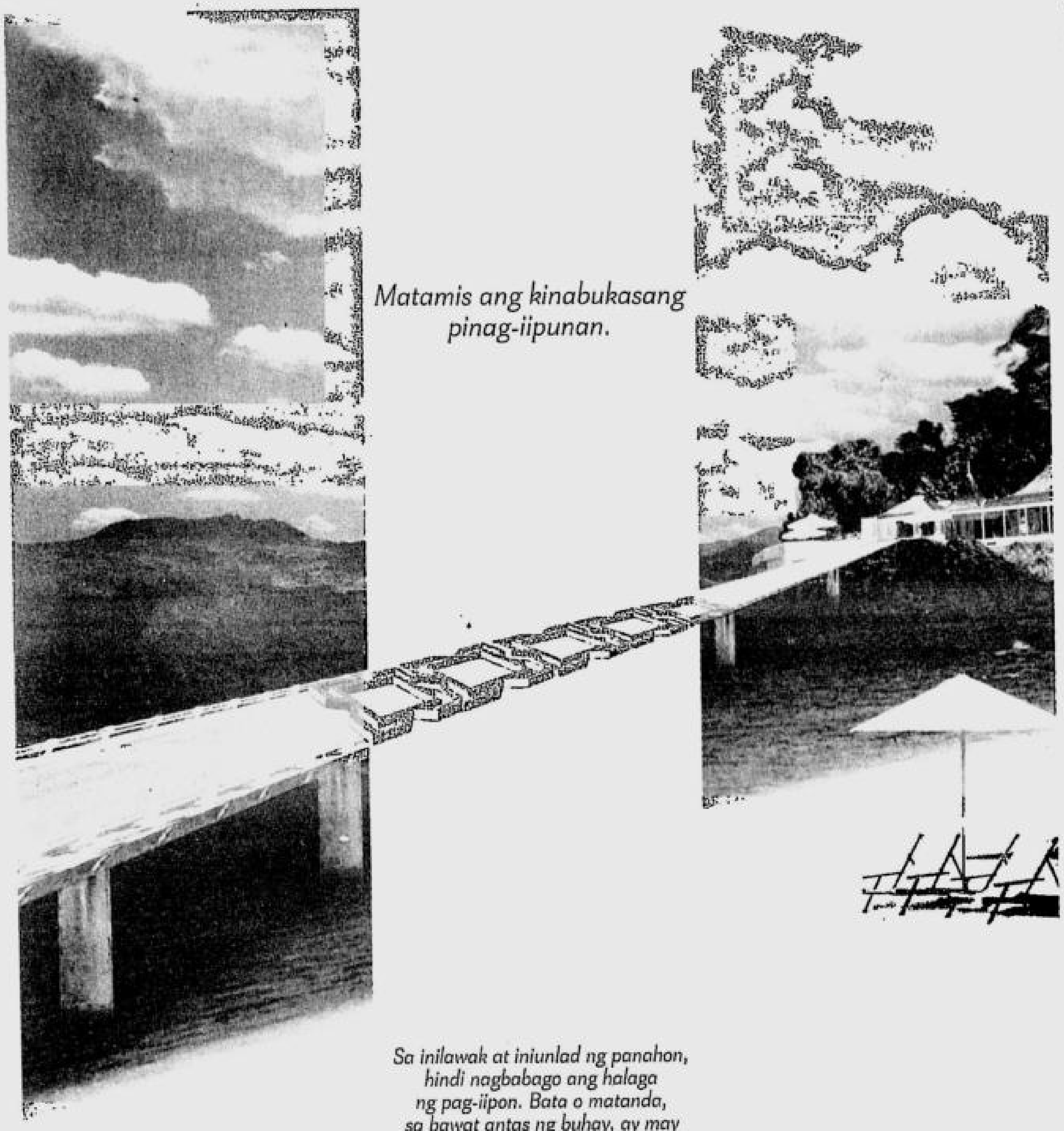
PCHC pioneers. Shown are (from left) Edward S. Go, PCHC chairman (1980); Alfonso E. Fucio, founding president; Wilfrido C. Teczon, founding chairman (1977) and Juan G. Coreces, founding director.

Addition of more regions into the 3-day clearing results in 5.28% increase in clearing items

THE Philippine Clearing House Corporation generated a total of 7.3 million in additional items processed for the year 2004 as a result of the integration of the seven major regional clearing centers formerly supervised by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas into the Greater Manila Area (GMA) clearing and the inclusion of four more out-of-town regions into the Inter-regional clearing.

The 12-month take-up of items from the converted out-of-town regions also contributed to this figure, based on a report released by the PCHC.

REGIONS/ G6



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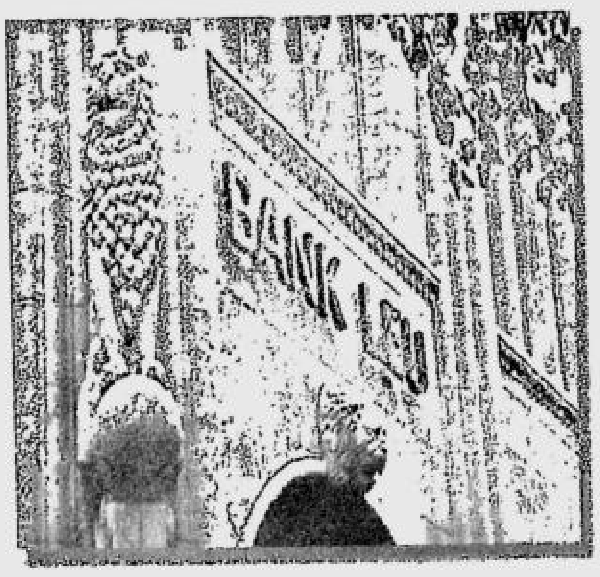

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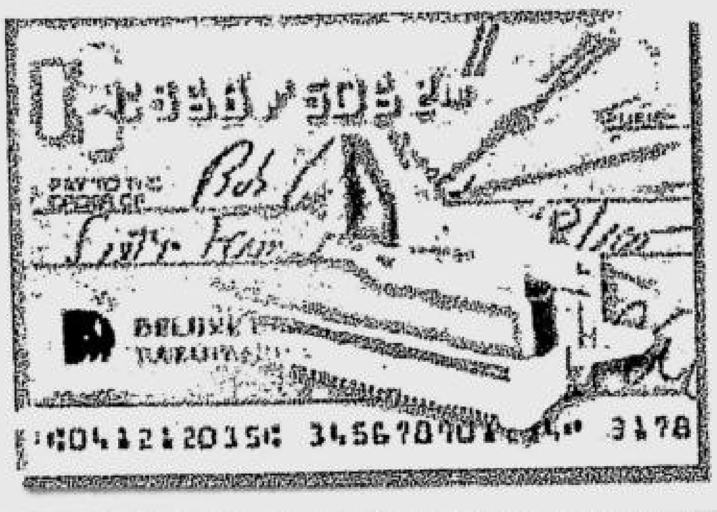

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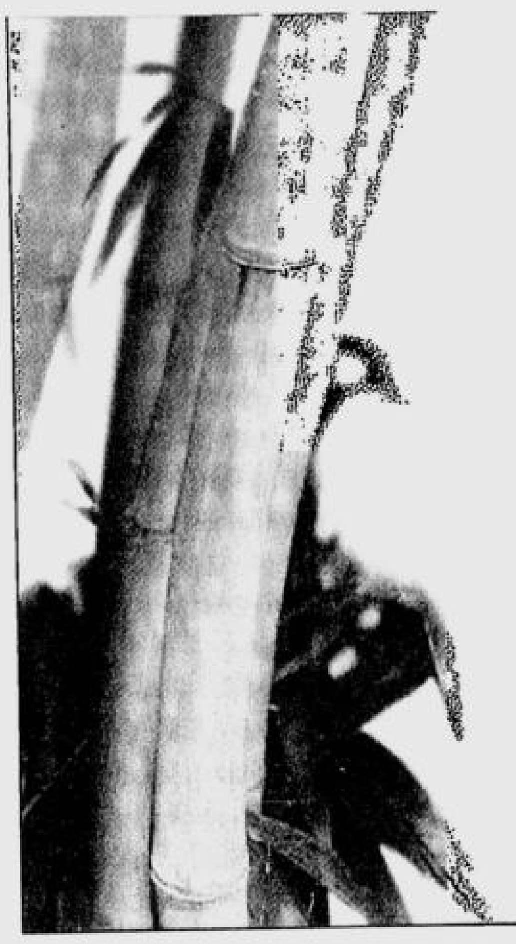

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On July 29, 1977, the Philippine Clearing House Corporation was incorporated as a private co-equally owned corporation by all commercial banks enlisted as members of the BAP purposely to automate, thru the medium of MICR-encoded cheques, the exchange of clearing items amongst member banks.

The Philippine Cheque Clearing System was then faced with an ever-increasing volume of clearing items that were manually processed, sorted and tabulated by the banks in tally sheets to arrive at clearing balances.

In collaboration with the then Central Bank of the Philippines which authorized thrift banks to operate checking accounts and use the facilities of the PCHC for clearing purposes, PCHC welcomed the Thrift Banks as clearing participants notwithstanding the exclusivity provisions in its corporate charter.

With the Clearing House Rules and Regulations approved and subsequently the Arbitration Mechanisms in place, the PCHC commenced its live operations on 6 June 1980 and stood proud being the first Automated Cheque Clearing House in Southeast Asia.

Initially programmed to automate the clearing operations of the Metro Manila Area with a volume of 154,000 clearing items a day, PCHC went through the pains of growing but remained steadfast and determined to achieve its primary corporate objectives--to provide, maintain and render an effective, convenient, efficient, economical cheque clearing service to the participating banks.

As the nation moved toward the path of resurgence and full recovery, after three consecutive years of adverse economic and business conditions in the early 1980's, PCHC maintained its course to achieve its corporate objectives while keeping abreast with the rapid changes and economic developments that were geared towards sustained higher growth in the coming years.

The optimism and confidence of the business community slowly came as reflected by the 58.1 % increase of annual clearing item volume, from 37.3 million in 1981 to 58.97 million by the end of the decade.

Value-Added Services

The decade of the 1990s marked the implementation of several milestone projects. Six of the nearby clearing regions located within a 150 km. radius from Manila were in-

MISSION/G5

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With a mission to maintain an efficient cheque clearing service in the country

From page G4

tegrated into the Metro Manila MICR clearing exchange, allowing uniform funds availability in 3 days within the combined clearing regions.

Dishonored items were separately processed and prioritized to hasten verification and posting of returned cheques by the presenting banks. The automation of foreign incoming remittance transactions followed through diskette exchange, which relieved the remitting bank from the laborious task of preparing drafts or managers' cheques in favor of the ultimate beneficiaries at the receiving bank.

With the advancement of technology and rapidly emerging trends towards electronic data interchange, PCHC readily assumed additional roles outside its primary mandate (Cheque Clearing Operations) without drastic changes in its organization and technology infrastructure.

Trusted as a neutral service bureau of the banks, PCHC expanded its operating outfit by implementing several electronic-based processing services.

In the mid-90's, the diskette exchange of foreign incoming remittances (FX Credit Clearing) was converted into an on-line delivery and re-branded as PDDTS Peso (now EPCS) & PDDTS Dollar Netting.

The Project Abstract Secure System (PASS) for Bureau of Customs was implemented, and for a while, the electronic-based Inter-Bank Call Loan System (from trade matching to first generation RTGS) was also operated by PCHC to bridge the gap during the critical transition period to real-time gross settlement of high-value Peso transfers.

Before the end of the decade, the Electronic Cheque Clearing System (ECCS) was introduced to complement the full computerization project of the BSP Accounting Department which required the submission of clearing results before 5PM of the banking day. ECCS enabled changes in the settlement priority and timeline for updating banks' Demand Deposit Accounts (DDAs).

Growth and Expansions

A stable political situation brought about a remarkable increase in item volume processed by the PCHC in the 1990s. Accordingly, PCHC augmented its processing capacity by acquiring additional hardware to further accommodate the ever-growing volume as well as improve operational efficiency. From 1990, item volume consistently increased year-by-year and reached 83.3% growth rate by the end of the decade with a peak of 85.7% in 1997.

Inspired by its mission to implement a single clearing region for the entire country, PCHC proceeded to automate and take over the Inter-Regional Clearing Operations with full support from the BSP.

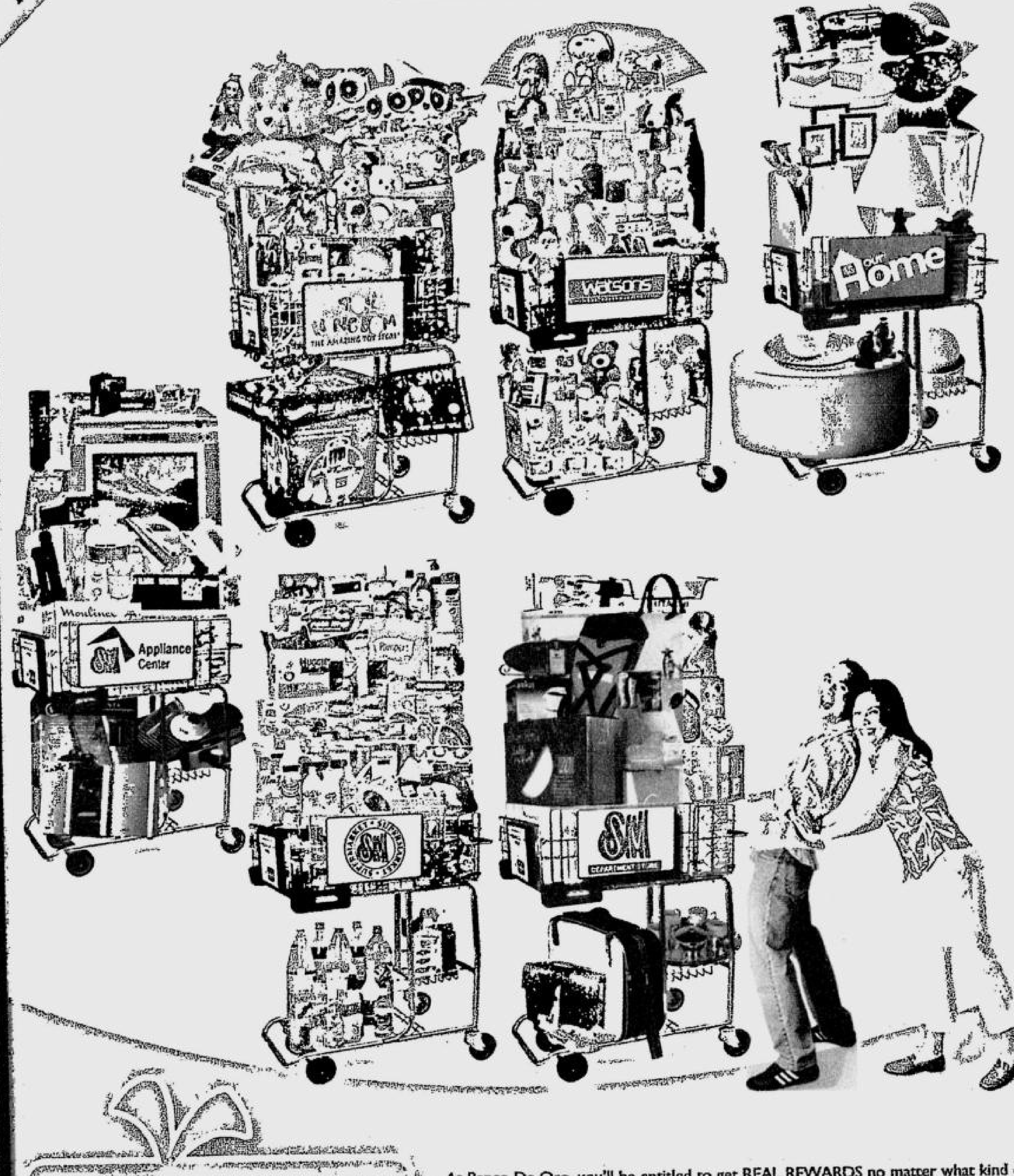
The out-of-town branches operating under a mail-based exchange was also included as part of the Inter-Regional Clearing exchange, dramatically reducing the clearing period from 30-45 days to 5-7 days

At the end of 2004, PCHC further expanded its operations by integrating seven additional clearing regions (one in Luzon and six regions in the Visayas and Mindanao areas) into the Greater Manila Clearing exchange which consequently shortened the clearing period from 5-6 days to a uniform of 3 days amongst the covered regions, i.e. now totaling 16 clearing regions.

While overall item volume statistics show positive growth rates with the integration of the seven regions, PCHC recorded a decline of items processed under the GMA Clearing Operations [exclusive of the seven (7) regions] by 1.41 % in 2004, from 139.58 million in 2003 to 137.61 million in 2004.

Moving Forward

Having achieved the corporate status as exclusive cheque clearing service provider for the country fittingly highlights PCHC's 25th year of operational existence in June 2005. Motivated by this responsibility, PCHC continues to reconfigure and retool its facilities for the coming years, focusing, in the immediate term, on flagship projects covering the upgrade from the traditional paper-based to "image-based" cheque clearing operation and enlarging the scope of utilization of the existing electronic-based payment system applications.



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Addition of more regions into the 3-day clearing results in 5.28% increase in clearing items

From page G2

The remarkable increase resulted to a 5.28% growth in the annual count for GMA and inter-regional clearing items. From 139.58 million cheques in 2003, the volume rose to 146.95 million in 2004.

Revisiting the past five (5) years, cheque volume continued to enjoy positive growth rates. From a minimal increment of 1.12 percent in 2001, the item count considerably went up by 9.17 percent in 2002, to 7.53 percent in 2003 and finally to 5.28 percent in 2004.

The PCHC report noted that items originating from the seven integrated regions cushioned the impact of the supposed decline in the volume of clearing items in 2004 as total count could have dropped by 1.41 % or 1.97 million cheques.

For the forthcoming year, volume is still expected to swing upward as items emanating from the seven regions will be fully recognized in the 2005 annual tally.

The rise in the annual count naturally changed the average daily volume to 586,165 items per day as compared with 2003, which had an average of 542,198 items per day.

Illustrating the percentage distribution of cheque items, it shows that 17 percent came from the combined volume of Cebu, Davao, Bacolod, Dagupan, Iloilo, Zamboanga and Cagayan de Oro, 15 percent from inter- regional areas, while the bulk of 68 percent is contributed by GMA and the original eight integrated regions.

Reject rate statistics

In terms of reject rates, the over-all result was record breaking, surpassing even last year's record of 0.98%. As it has continued to be under the 1.00% mark, the 0.85% reject rate is remarkable considering that such rate was achieved in spite of the inclusion of the seven regions, which prior to integration, processed their cheques under a manual/conventional environment.

Complemented by the enhancement in the MICR Read Technology, the foregoing record in reject rates only goes to show that the industry is experiencing a significant improvement in the MICR quality of both the printing and amount encoding of cheques.

Reject rate is the ratio between the non-machine readable cheques and the total number of items processed on prime sort.

As to the percentage average return vis-a-vis previous day's clearing transactions, an average ratio of 1.3 percent was recorded in 2004, which likewise improved the previous year's record of 1.7%.

Returned Items

The volume of dishonored items for the year 2004 was surprisingly 15.67% lower than the previous year.

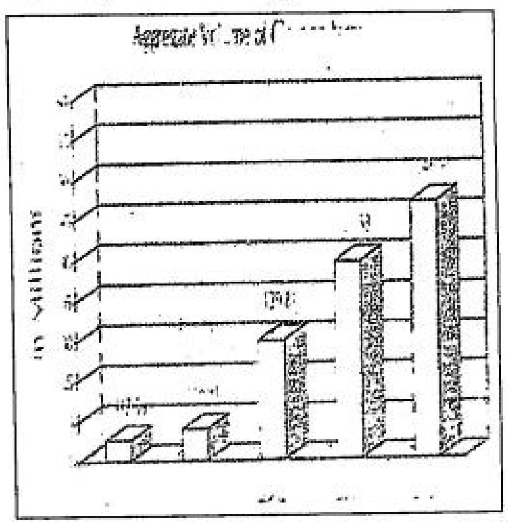
The sudden drop, despite the increase in the volume of items, was attributed to the PCHC Board's decision to revise the seven-year-old service charge from Php1,000.00 per item to Php 2,000.00 per item effective April 1, 2004.

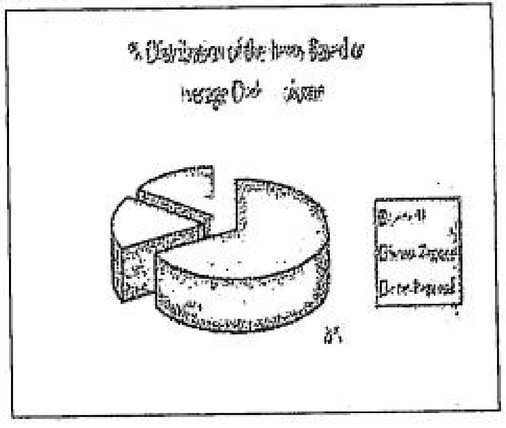
With check issuers becoming more aware of the increase in the service charge for dishonored items, it is reasonably safe to expect that the average return ratio may further improve in the coming years.

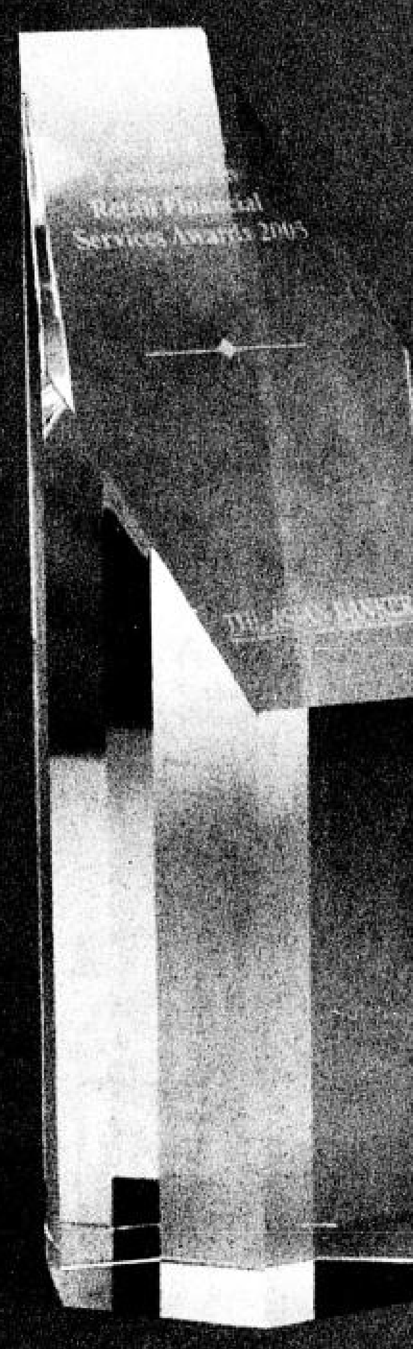
On the overall reject rate on returns, there was an increase from 1.30 percent to 1.35 percent. The very slight increment can be due to the fact that the seven regions are still adjusting to the new system whereby all five fields in the prescribed MICR code line are to be encoded/ by the new participants. Overall, the 1.35% reject rate is still way below the 5.0% threshold limit set for Returns processing.

Looking at the values, the average daily amount of items processed went up from P49.507 billion in 2003 to P53.664 billion in 2004. On the other hand, the daily amount of items dishonored went down from P310.7 million in 2003 to P270.0 million in 2004.

In terms of percentages, these figures translate to an 8.4 percent increase in the values cleared and a 12.9 percent decline in the values of returned items resulting to an increment in good funds of 99.5 percent compared to 99.37 percent that was posted in 2003.







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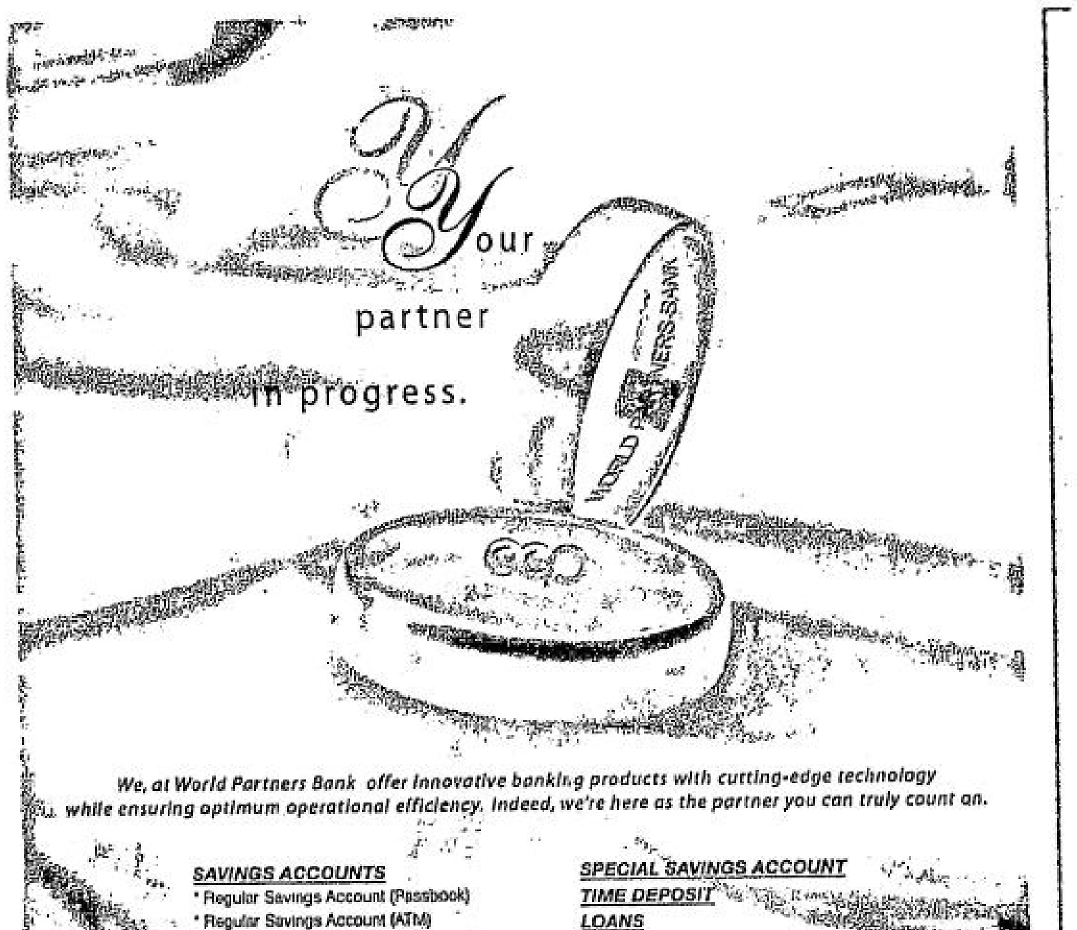

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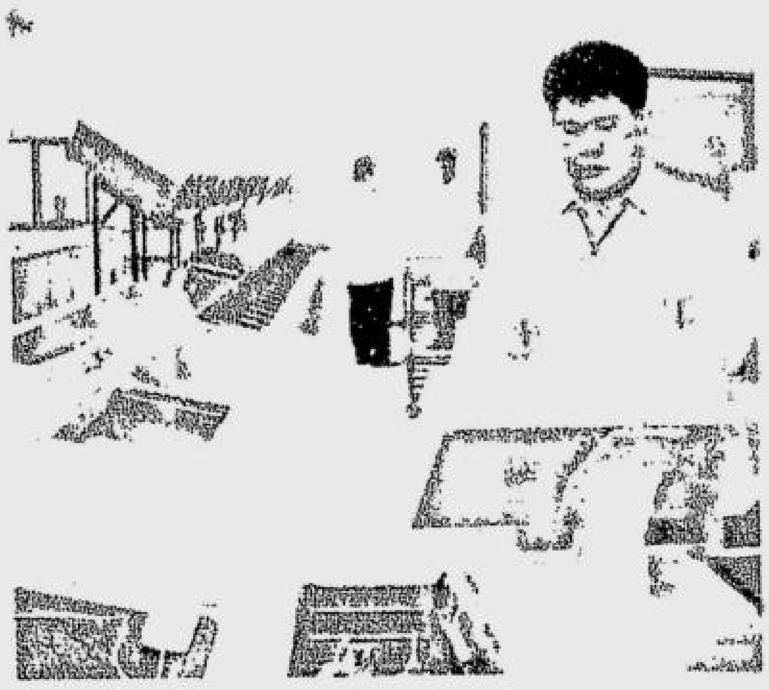

A piece of cheque trivia

WILL cheques go out of style or use? With the proliferation of different modes of electronic payments such as the use of plastic cards and even text from cellphones, the electronic era of paperless periods may have arrived. But cheques, because of its inherent [illegible] image, will definitely remain and may eventually adapt to the needs of the banks.

Philippine Clearing House Corporation president Francisco Yap Jr. said the corporation saw no decline in the number of cheques it clears through the years.

In 2004, PCHC handled a total of 146.95 million volume in cheques. Yap said the corporation handles about 500,000 cheques every day and the volume peaks to more than a million during banking days near holiday dates.

Yap said banking products, such as payment schemes, continue to evolve. Since the plastic credit card was introduced in the 1960s, plastics have become the most popular way of paying for noncash transactions. Many experts believe the future lies with electronic cash. A whole range of schemes has been introduced that involve the exchange of encrypted data instead of paper.

Yap said cheques still have a very bright future and will remain popular because they have the built-in advantage not found in electronic form of payment.

Cheques have always the built-in guarantee of security because it is a record on paper. Whatever bad happens to a transaction, there is a paper trail that can always be checked. For this reason, a cheque is a legal document.

First used in the 17th century in the United Kingdom, cheques were a convenient way of carrying out large transactions between trading partners without the dangers of carrying large amounts of cash across the country.

The use of cheques became popular for personal banking in the 20th century. Its usage significantly increased until after the mid-1960s when there was a marked increase in the bank account holders.

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PCHC executive officers with arbitration and technology consultants. Shown are (from left, seated) Atty. Teresa Leviste-Avellana, ARBICOM Executive Officer, PCHC president Francisco V. Yap Jr., Marcela V. Bautista, SVP Controller. Standing (from left) Emmanuel E. Barcena, VP operations; Juan G. Coreces, treasurer; Francis Avellana, BAP director for systems and technology and Gil A. Lim, VP information technology.

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Nationwide Clearing Coverage

GMA/Integrated 'Local' Clearing Regions

1. Metro Manila
2. Angeles
3. Cabanatuan
4. Lucona
5. Batangas
6. Tarlac
7. Olongapo
8. Laguna
9. Cavite
10. Cebu
11. Davao
12. Bacolod
13. Dagupan
14. Iloilo
15. Zamboanga
16. Cagayan De Oro
17. Tacloban
18. Baguio
19. La Union
20. Iligan

Out-Of-Town Areas Converted into Inter-regional Clearing

1. Daet
2. Masbate
3. Calapan
4. Ormoc
5. Dipolog
6. Valencia
7. Malaybalay
8. Midsayap
9. Kidapawan
10. Koronadal
11. Mati
12. Agusan D. Sur
13. Bislig
14. Tandag
15. Ipil
16. Buug
17. Basilan
18. Jolo
19. Maasin
20. Baybay
21. Catarman
22. Catbalogan
23. Calbayog
24. Antique
25. Kabankalan
26. San Carlos
27. Pagadian
28. San Jose, Occ. Mindoro
29. Tacurong Sultan Kudarat
30. Gingoog City Misamis Or.
31. Oroquieta Misamis Occ.

Regional 'Local' Clearing Exchanges*

1. Naga
2. Legaspi
3. Laoag
4. Dumaguete
5. Surigao
6. Tuguegarao
7. Gen. Santos
8. Ozamis
9. Santiago
10. Cotabato
11. Kalibo
12. Butuan
13. Vigan
14. Tagbilaran
15. Roxas
16. Puerto Princesa

*PCHC to complete conversion by 29 June 2005

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How GMA/integrated local cheques are cleared

THE clearing process involves the transmission and settlement of payments between accounts held at different banks and different branches of the same bank. It operates on a three-day processing cycle:

Day One - A cheque deposit received by a presenting or collecting bank during the course of a day's business will be processed by the bank during that day. The presenting bank will forward the cheque to PCHC on or before 5 p.m. for processing and delivery to the drawee bank. In the evening, drawee bank will determine sufficiency of funds.

Day Two - If the cheque is honored, it is retained by the drawee bank for bank statement purposes. Dishonored cheque will be returned to the collecting bank thru PCHC on or before 5 p.m.

Day Three - Funds are now available for client withdrawal.

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4. CITIBANK, N.A
5. PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANK
6. PHILIPPINE TRUST COMPANY
7. CHINA BANKING CORPORATION
8. PHILIPPINE BANK OF COMMUNICATIONS
9. BANK OF AMERICA
10. EQUITABLE PCIBANK
11. SECURITY BANK CORPORATION
12. PRUDENTIAL BANK
13. MAYBANK PHILIPPINES
14. METROPOLITAN BANK & TRUST COMPANY
15. UNITED OVERSEAS BANK PHILIPPINES
16. RIZAL COMMERCIAL BANKING CORP.
17. UNITED COCONUT PLANTERS BANK
18. ALLIED BANKING CORPORATION
19. PHILIPPINE VETERANS BANK
20. LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
21. AL-AMANAH ISLAMIC BANK
22. UNION BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
23. BANK OF COMMERCE
24. BANK OF TOKYO-MITSUBISHI, LTD.
25. BANCO DE ORO UNIVERSAL BANK
26. INT'L. COMMERCIAL BANK OF CHINA
27. DEVELOPMENT BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
28. EAST-WEST BANKING CORPORATION
29. MIZUHO CORPORATE BANK
30. DEUTSCHE BANK
31. INTERNATIONALE NEDERLANDEN BANK
32. BANGKOK BANK PUBLIC CO. LTD.
33. INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE BANK
34. CHINATRUST COMMERCIAL BANK
35. ANZ BANK
36. KOREA EXCHANGE BANK
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39. EXPORT AND INDUSTRY BANK
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41. ASIA UNITED BANK
42. BANK OF CHINA

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1. PHILIPPINE POSTAL SAVINGS BANK
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4. INSULAR BANK
5. PLANTERS DEV. BANK
6. KEPPEL BANK
7. PHILAM SAVINGS BANK
8. PHILIPPINE SAVINGS BANK
9. UCPB SAVINGS BANK
10. CENTURY SAVINGS BANK
11. BPI-DIRECT SAVINGS BANK
12. ASIATRUST DEVELOPMENT BANK
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14. FIRST CONSOLIDATED BANK
15. BANCO FILIPINO
16. MANILA BANK
17. PALAWAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
18. RCBC SAVINGS BANK)
19. MALAYAN SAVINGS & MORTGAGE BANK
20. ISLA BANK
21. HSBC SAVINGS BANK
22. EQUITABLE SAVINGS BANK
23. ROBINSONS BANK
24. CITYSTATE SAVINGS BANK
25. PHILIPPINE BUSINESS BANK
26. AMERICAN EXPRESS BANK
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30. ORION SAVINGS BANK
31. CENTENNIAL SAVINGS BANK
32. ANCHOR BANK
33. BANKWISE
34. REAL BANK
35. LBC BANK
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38. ONE NETWORK BANK, INC.